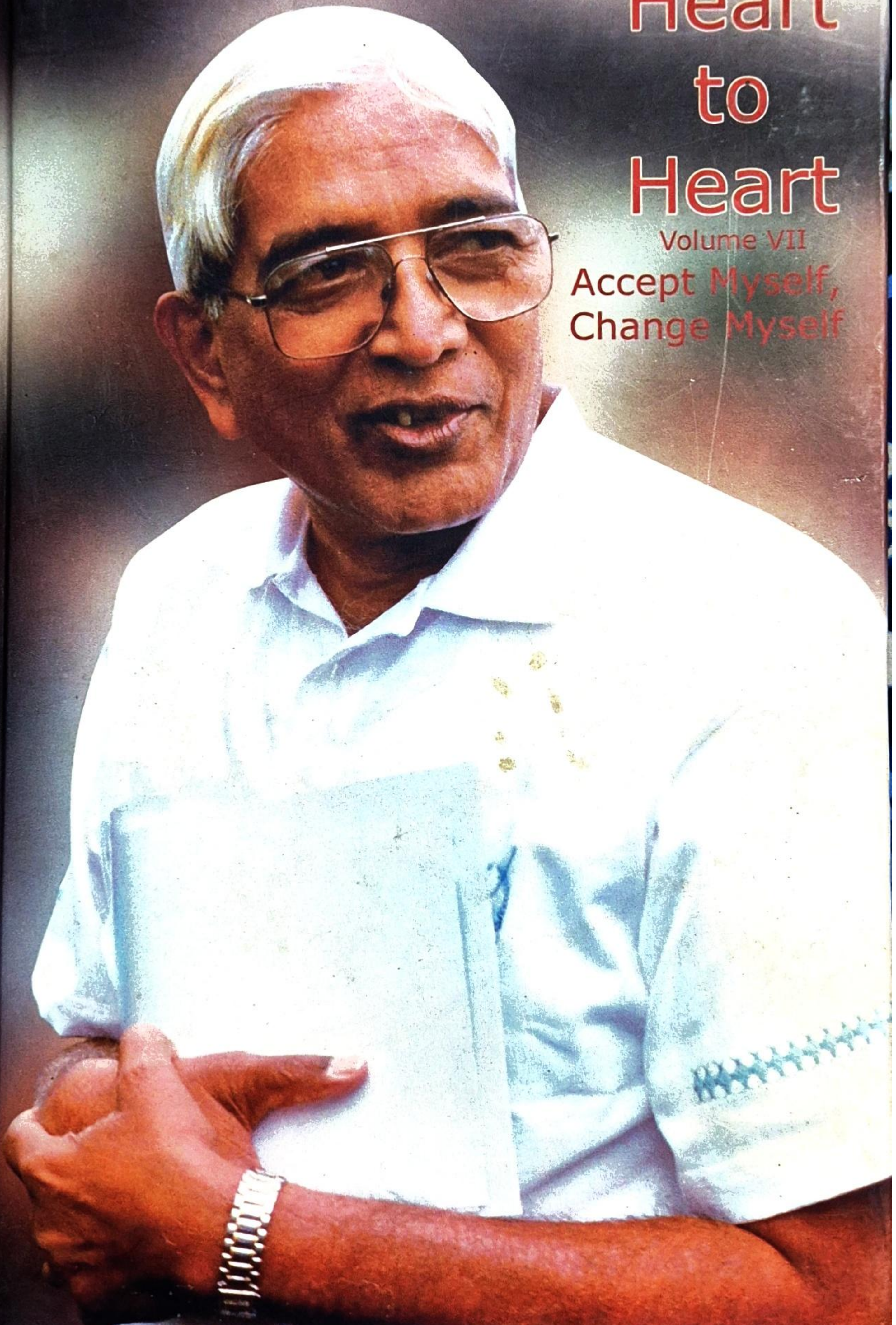
Heart to Heart

Volume VII

Accept Myself, Change Myself



HEART TO HEART

Volume VII

Talks from seminars held in
Europe, South Africa, USA, and Malaysia
1994

Talks given by
Shri P. Rajagopalachari

SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION®

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I

EUROPE

January, 1994

HE IS IN YOUR HEART

Vrads Sande, Denmark

1 January, 1994

Maybe I shall speak. Several thoughts come. You know, there is always a jumble of thoughts, and what is relevant and what is not relevant, is difficult to say. One idea is that what is not relevant today may become relevant tomorrow. For instance, the plane ticket that I have in my pocket has no relevance today, but tomorrow, without it I cannot leave.

Babuji Maharaj used to say that everything in nature, everything in this universe, has its place. And everything is relevant to life. Homoeopaths know that we have homoeopathic medicines which are called nosodes made from poison — snake poison, scorpion, etc. So, there are situations where even poison is necessary. I am not talking of the perfume, but of the real poison! Now, when human beings arbitrarily classify things as good and bad, we are, sort of, infringing upon nature's territory. In nature there is nothing good, nothing bad. They are what they are. As Babuji said, "God is God. What else can He be? You cannot describe." So, what is poison under one circumstance may become medicine under another circumstance.

This idea of judging things — that this is good, that is bad — we have to drop it. The most beautiful thing about Sahaj Marg is that it has no idea of virtue and vice, or good and bad. As Birthe explained, there is only God and grossness. People don't normally understand that even what we think is good can produce grossness, because grossness is nothing more than the impression of our thoughts and actions. Everything leaves an impression, until we are able to reach a state, or a stage of existence, where we no longer form impressions.

So, we cannot have good impressions and bad impressions. There are only impressions. Like when you step on the sand, or step on ice or snow, you leave your footprint. Is it good or bad? It shows that somebody has passed this way. If you are like Robinson Crusoe, on an island, you think you are all alone several years, and suddenly one day you find a footstep on the sand, and that fellow is terrified. I am sure you have all have read that story of Robinson Crusoe. Now, why should a human footstep be a matter of terror? Why should it frighten him?

This is like when you are asleep and you hear a noise which you should not hear; it frightens you. You see someone you think is not there; it becomes a frightening thing. So, the unexpected is frightening. Yesterday we had firecrackers, fireworks. Nobody was frightened. But if, today, you go out and hear a lot of noise and see blue and green and red flashing up into the sky, we will probably telephone for the fire service, because today is not fireworks day.

Eventually we come to this idea of the expected, and the unexpected. The expected is familiar. We think it is good. There is no fear with it. The expected guest is welcome. The unexpected makes us afraid. The unexpected guest is generally unwelcome. We have become so divorced from reality, from God, that when He comes unexpectedly into our life, we are also afraid of God. Everybody talks of love of God, but I beg to say that we are all afraid of God, for the simple reason that we don't know what God is, who God is, where God is. We have all become experts in listening to things and accepting with the intellect — certain things which we like, certain things which we don't like.

Now, is God a matter of the intellect? Is it my intellect which has to guide and say, "Yes, God exists"? Has the intellect this capacity? Babuji beautifully said, "We can only think of material things. We cannot think of abstract things." God is abstract — He cannot be a subject of thought. God is abstract — He cannot be a subject of our senses. We cannot smell Him, we cannot touch Him, we cannot taste. So, with what are we to accept the existence of God? The heart!

So you see, we come to this fundamental spiritual wisdom that there is the way of understanding, and the way of knowing. The heart understands; the intellect knows. Now, we don't really understand everything that we know, nor do we know everything that we understand. What we seek in spirituality is understanding — understanding human beings. And this understanding — again, please don't think it is intellectual — it is not like understanding how, for instance, a computer works. That is knowledge understanding, intellectual understanding. But when a person who has been unable to understand his father or mother or brother or sister, suddenly says, "Today I understand my father, or mother," with what does he or she understand? It is with the heart.

Therefore, there is this fundamental importance given to the heart, especially in Sahaj Marg. Babuji Maharaj said, "If there should be a choice given to you, to keep your heart or your head, keep your heart." It looks funny when Babuji said it that way, but he has also spoken in Urdu, that, "Even if you have to cut off your head and throw it away for spirituality, it is still a cheap price that you pay for it." After all, the head is only a computer. I have said this so often that I don't want to go on repeating it. The head is only a computer. The heart is what tells you what is really right, what is really wrong.

Now when we come to this idea of understanding, from where this longing for a spiritual life, for a divinised life, for perfection, comes — if you look carefully into your lives you will find it is only from the heart that longing comes. The head does not say, "Dear brother, look for God." The head says what you have programmed it to say, that New Year is to be celebrated, that Christmas is a time for gifts, and so on and so forth.

So, all this information is here, programmed, and we react to that program automatically. In this automatic nature of our functioning lies the real danger of our becoming automatons, robots, because we are now following patterns which have been established in ourselves, by what you call culture, by language, by custom, by tradition. So that through the ages we have come to react to the calendar without any feeling for the real thing that we are celebrating. "Happy New Year!", everybody says. How much of it is from the heart? Or is it just a traditional greeting, that early in the morning, we wish everybody "Happy New Year." And what do you mean by "Happy New Year"? Does it mean tomorrow, the second of January, when it is no more new year, there need not be happiness? Or are we trying to say, "Let the year be happy"? A little better, but does it mean that in 1995, we don't need to be happy? Does it mean that we have any control over events in 1994, that we have this, shall we say, temerity to say, "Happy New Year" — as if, if somebody says, "Happy New Year," it is going to be a happy new year? Like in the Christian church they say "Amen" when everything is done.

So you see, we have become responsive, not to our feelings, but to set patterns of existence. Somebody dies — we have to dress in black because we are mourning. And because clothes become expensive and there are no deaths every day, thank heavens, a man says, "Well, I have to wear it two or three times a year. Why should I waste money on an old black suit? Let me wear a black arm-band to show my respect for the dead."

So, from mourning for the dead, sorrow for the dead, it has become respect for the dead. What about respect for the living? Do we have respect for the living? Where does respect come from? Should we respect a person only because he or she is respectable? Respectable means, capable of being respected by others. Is it necessary to earn somebody's respect? Is it not enough that a human being, by virtue of having been born as a human being — accepted as the highest level of evolution today — is this not sufficient reason for respect? Should we not respect each other for the mere fact of being human beings and not animals? But we say, "No, no. I don't respect him. I don't respect her. I don't respect my father." If you cannot respect your brother and your father and your child — even children have to be respected, because love means, also, respect. Respect may be without love, but in love there must be respect. If a boy loves his father, there must be respect for the father.

What is respect, really? It is an acceptance of a fact that this man gave me life. Let us forget God and theology for the time being. Where does life come from? Where and when is a baby conceived? It is human arrogance to think that, just because a man and a woman unite, they have produced a baby. They have not produced anything. There is this cellular biology which says, you know, this egg in the woman has been fertilised, and it goes on dividing, dividing, dividing, and a form is given to it, often by chance, by laws of heredity, the morphology is established. But where does the **life** in it come from? To say, "The father gave me life, the mother gave me life" — yes, it is a matter of respect, but not necessarily the truth.

So you see, truth transcends respect, but it does not mean that it negates respect. My father may have been just a beggar under the trees, begging for money in India, but etiquette, human etiquette, human values, human custom, demand that I still respect him because he is my father. Otherwise, why do we call God our father? "Our Father, who art in Heaven." Who has seen this Father? Who has seen this Heaven? And where is this Heaven? And how was this man our Father? Who said so? So you see, there is no need to reason behind this and seek a reason for saying, "God is my father." He is the ultimate Creator, we assume. Therefore, as long as we accept that He is the Creator, we accept that He is the Father, too.

So you see, when we become reactive or responsive only to set elements in our calendars, in our daily routines, we are becoming more and more mechanical, more and more machines. I was making a joke with the German group today, that in Germany the discipline is so strong, and etiquette is so strong, that often a man requests his wife for permission before giving her a kiss! Now, where is that love? Love must be spontaneous. And which woman, even a wife, would say, "Yes, give me a kiss," because she thinks it is giving up her, you know, right. "If I say, 'Yes,' now, he will want more next." So, what does the right man do? Grab his wife and kiss her! But then you say, "Oh, he is a brute, you see! The fellow has no manners. Brutal." So, where is the brute ending and the gentleman beginning? And if there is love, can it be brutal? If there is no love, can it be gentlemanly at all, ever?

You have to think very carefully about how to respond in life to every situation that will arise in that life. It may vary with individuals. It **does** vary with individuals, but by and large, a broad pattern is existing for human life. Should I go by the calendar? Should I go by a set of rules? Have I nothing here which tells me what to do at each moment of time? Should I obey this or this? Can religion be a matter of the intellect? Can God be a subject for the intellect? Can my life be a subject for my intellect? Because, even when we judge ourselves, we tend to judge with our intellect. When they say, "Charity begins at home," it means judge yourself charitably first. Don't be so arrogant to think that you are already a God who cannot make mistakes, who cannot sin. If you can judge yourself charitably, you will judge everybody charitably. But we have neither charity towards ourselves, nor towards others. We don't have charity towards others because we have no charity towards ourselves.

We are projecting our hatred — self-hatred — upon the whole universe. The destruction that we see around us of human values, of human creations, of human beings, is nothing but this madness for power, self-hatred, all put together into one nice package, which you may call an atomic bomb, or anything that you like. Why should people hate each other? In no religion does it say that you should hate a man who does not belong to that religion — not even in Islam. If people who read the Koran understand, it only says, "Love. Love the sinner." Why? Because the sinner needs your love more than the saint. What does your saint want your love for?

We all say we love Babuji — very easy to love Babuji — a soft, cuddly man, who looked very secure and safe, from whom you never expected anything but love. It is easy to love such a person. He never blamed, he never complained, he never asked. But is that real love? Or is it a feeling of safety in his presence which makes you say, "I love Babuji"? I don't want to disrespect your love for my Master, but I often wonder how many of you really loved him. Is it like the love of a child for its mother — an unknowing love, an unthinking love, a natural response to a relationship? Because if it were so, then only can such a child, when it grows up and becomes conscious, say, "I hate my mother!" "But you are loving your mother so long!" "Yes, Chari, you know, I wasn't aware at that time. I was yet a child."

A child running and hugging its mother till the age of three, four, five, is not a sign of love. The child is not yet conscious of love. It is a sign of its dependence. Now, here we come to the spiritual business, you see, where Master says, "Create dependency." So, we can have dependency without love. We can have love without dependency. And when we have the third formula, which is love **with** the dependency, it becomes surrender.

Human values are dealing only with the two opposites. Spirituality comes in between, puts the two opposites together, and creates a new reality, a new truth, a new vitality, a new possibility. Because love without dependency cannot be surrender. Dependency without love, even the animals have it — the calf runs after the cow, the pup runs after the bitch. You don't say the pup loves the bitch, or the calf loves the cow. It seems nice to us to feel that our children love us, but in spirituality we cannot deal in such fictions and imaginations. Spirituality demands a rigorous truthfulness. Truthfulness, not in this idea of saying, "I am Johann Jogensen." Everybody knows that. That is information. Truthfulness is, "Will I love this man whether he gives me anything or not?" Suppose the Master was to punish me — will I still love him? Suppose he is to say, "Mr. X, you shall go to hell for six thousand years." Will I still love him? If you read some of the Sufi saints, especially this woman called Rabia, Rabia Dawaiya she is called, famous poet, famous saint, Sufi. She says, "Oh God, if I love you for reaching heaven, deny me that heaven. If I come to you out of fear of hell, cast me into that hell of which I am afraid."

Love is a very serious business. It does not depend on giving and taking. It is not an exchange. It is not a transaction. Love is absolute. Surrender means — absolute love. You cannot say, "No, no, no, you see, till yesterday, I loved Babuji Maharaj, but today, you know, he frowned upon me." Why not? Birthe just described this beautiful climate, as nature in its white purity. That's a way of poetic expression. But to an Indian like me who has been walking barefoot all his life — I may have other ideas of this winter! I may see its beauty, but it may not be appealing to me. What is cold to appeal to me? What is cold beauty to me? Beauty must have warmth. I mean, in human love we expect warmth, we expect sympathy, we expect acceptance.

So you see, these are **human** expectations. Now, if you see some of the most famous photographs, some of the most beautiful photographs, there is a tall tree in a desert, taken in a particular way, Verena will support this, and the photograph looks so beautiful — stunningly beautiful — and it probably wins prizes, too. Is the prize for the photography, or for the photographer, or for that tall tree standing alone in the desert, of no use to any human being? Are we dealing with illusions or reality?

At every stage in our spiritual career, every moment in our spiritual career, it is like this mariner of the ancient times who had to watch his compass all the time, watch the courses all the time. Where is the pole star? Where is south? Where is north? We are being misled by emotions which we mistake for feelings. We are being misled by a sense of security, interpreted as togetherness. We are all together here, we have a sense of security, we are all Sahaj Margis, we all have a beautiful Master. Wonderful! But is it love, is it brotherhood, is it togetherness? Or is it only a sense of security that today, four hundred of us are living together in comparative harmony, comparative peace, and therefore we feel secure.

You know, if you go on a long trip by train in India, you get friendly with your co-passenger. Suddenly he is tying up his bed — you know, in India we roll up our bed and tie it up — and you say, "Where are you going?" He says, "I am getting off at the next station." Immediately this man feels insecure. "Oh, I thought you are also going to Delhi." "No, no, I didn't tell you, but I am getting off at Bhopal." This man is insecure, because who will come next to occupy that seat? We don't know. But, it is another human being. They are not going to put a chimpanzee in that seat, or a cow! And you did not know this passenger who is getting out before you came into the train yourself.

So you see, security grows as a false idea to combat our fear of being alone. Loneliness — that is why we are telephoning everybody, speaking all the time. "What are you doing?" "No, no, I am doing nothing this evening. Why not we meet? Why not we get together." You know, this famous American way of life. "Why don't we get together?" What is this 'getting together'? If you have a Master of whom you are so loving, who loves you so much, who protects you under all circumstances, is it not enough togetherness for our life? If it is true that my Master is divine, I have faith in him, I love him totally, I am entirely dependent on him, in whom else should I put my trust and my faith and my courage and my whatever it is, and say, "I need togetherness. I am feeling lonely"? Can a real *bhakta* ever feel lonely?

You see, one of my problems with Christianity was this last cry of Christ from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" I hope Christian people will not misunderstand this statement, but for me, it was difficult to reconcile this idea of a great spiritual master, at the end saying, "Where is my God? Why have You forsaken me?" Do we forsake God, or does God forsake us? Can God ever forsake us? He cannot, because that poor fellow, whoever He is, wherever He is, has committed this ultimate foolishness of being in everything that exists! How can He forsake? Even when I am dead, He is with me! He will be with my soul wherever it goes. If I go to hell, my God will be in hell with me. I can put my God in hell or heaven, according to how I live. My God cannot put me into hell or heaven because He has no power over me. This is spirituality.

Often, I used to argue with Babuji. I said, "Babuji, why did God choose such a role?" That a man goes to prison, his God is in prison with him. He goes to drink at the bar, his God is there. He goes to a prostitute, his God is there, too. He commits suicide, the God is still there with him. What a fate, what a destiny for a God. One way of looking at it!

So, who forsook whom? It was that moment of despair, when all his life's cherished ideals had been more or less destroyed. One disciple sold him, another disciple betrayed him thrice, the other disciple just disappeared, and all the company he had was two thieves, one on either side of him to keep him company on the cross. In that moment of utter despair, his cry comes. In spirituality there should be no despair, because where there is faith, there can be no despair. Like where there is courage, there can be no fear. Where there is light, there can be no darkness. Is it possible that in this room, there is light and there is also darkness? If the light is switched off, yes, there is darkness.

So, where faith is switched off, there is despair. Where hope is switched off, there is hopelessness. **We** do the switching on and off — God has no hand in this.

God is my eternal companion. For Him, there is no bar, there is no bordello, there is no underground vault in which the corpse is being placed. He is everywhere; for Him, everything is the same. For Him, the heart of the *bhakta* and the heart of the sinner is the same. He says, "I am everywhere, in everything. **You** are creating the difference in yourself. Thinking you are a sinner, or thinking you are a saint. If I am present in the heart of everything, how can there be a sinner, and how can there be a saint? Both are only the containers for the divine essence which you call God." Coffee, put in an aluminium vessel or in a stainless steel pot by Georg Jensen, is the same coffee! Jensen coffee pot — four thousand kroner. Aluminium coffee pot — two hundred kroner. Tin pot — five kroner. But the coffee is the same.

So, we should try to know ourselves by the essence that is within. And if I have been able to establish that essence, that contact with my essence which is inside me, I am now neither a saint nor a sinner, I am what He wants me to be at that moment in time. Because **He** becomes the guiding force, the guiding principle. He who activates me from within and says, "Now you go this side." "Yes, sir." "About turn." "But you said, 'Go straight!'" "Yes. I am telling you to go back. You go back." "Oh, what a boss I have, you see! One moment He says, 'Go forward,' next moment He says, 'Backward.' Damn fool, how can he be God?" Intellectual nonsense!

So, we have to understand that all our values are perverted values, corrupted values, based on extremes of assessment and understanding. That this weather is nice; this weather is rotten. This is good; this is bad. This colour is beautiful; this colour is ugly. Some are white; some are black. Nothing exists. God is in the heart of the black man as much as in the heart of the white man. He is in the heart of the Jew; He is in the heart of the Gentile. He is in the heart of a Mohammedan as much as He is in the heart of a Christian.

Now, if He is everywhere, then where have these differences come from? Because **we** create it. I am

German, you are Dane, he is French, she is Italian — these are **our** creations. God does not know where Italy is. Does God know where Italy is, until there is trouble in Italy, or Yugoslavia? You don't know where your leg is until there is pain. When there is pain, you say, "Oh, Chari, I have some pain here." "What is that?" "Oh, it's my thigh." So, you understand you have a thigh when you have a pain in it. It is negative thinking, pain, suffering, which draws our attention to something. That being the case, Babuji said, "God is more with the sinner than with the saint." Why? Because he **needs** Him. If your husband is a doctor, he is more with the patient than he is with you. But you are annoyed: "Oh, I married this fellow, you know, but he is always going around and tending to patients, for heaven's sake, sickness, filthy people. Even at night he doesn't come home!" You should not have married a doctor. Isn't it?

So, people are afraid of God, and therefore people are happy with religions. I said the other day that religion has not lasted so long because religion is good or deserved to exist. Religion existed because **we** choose that religion should exist. Very convenient! I don't have to believe in God; I have only to go to the church, light a candle, put ten kroner or one hundred kroner on the plate, and the father is happy.

So you see, religion is a simple corruption of spirituality by man. We have spirituality, and when we are afraid of Him who is inside, we say, "For heaven's sake!" (For heaven's sake, eh?) "You remain there in that altar, which is very nice. I will make it of gold, of silver, of ivory, of bronze" — stolen from all over the world, pirated from the poor nations. Elephants killed so that there may be ivory. What for? "To show my love for You!" I love God so much, you see, that all these beautiful churches with their beautiful altars and beautiful columns and beautiful facades and beautiful stained glass — every single piece of that work is a lie, and an exhibition of our lack of faith in God, of our fear of God, which makes us put God in the church, and ourselves at home — a happy situation. We can do what we like! Occasionally we go into church just to remind God: "I am there. Please continue to look after me." We are buying our way to peace.

So you see, we come back to this original theme that spirituality cannot decline unless **we** choose that it should decline. It happens when we are afraid of God and we isolate Him — somewhere away from us, but accessible. So, we have a man there who is a priest, who does what we should be doing. He offers prayers, he lights the candles. There is a verger who rings the bell, and we have beautiful people who come and sing, the choirboys and the organ and whatnot. We create an atmosphere of silent hypocrisy. Here, outside the church, it is noisy hypocrisy. Inside the church, it is silent hypocrisy.

In spirituality, it is silent truth. I must sit silently, close my eyes, negate all my activity to the extent possible, mental, physical, and focus on the heart, and try to establish contact with Him within by knocking at the door of the heart, as Babuji Maharaj said. He doesn't easily open it, because Babuji said, "When He opens the door of the heart and comes out to see who is there, your job is finished." Probably, that's what is meant in Christianity: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee." But you have to knock! Not just once, and say, "No, no, I don't think He is inside!" Because again, we are afraid of what will come out of that open door. So, like children, we give a timid knock and say, "Mummy, He is not there." "No, no, my son. Knock again!" Keep knocking until the door opens.

That is why spirituality is called the way of courage, the path of the brave, the path of the warrior. Fearlessness, yes. Faithlessness, no. Courage, yes. Disbelief, no. Belief, yes. Belief in what? Belief that when I have a heart, there must be something in that heart. I am moving, I am living, I am doing so many things. But one moment I am dead, and there is nothing any more. What is that which makes it dead, and what is it that kept it alive? A fundamental inquiry, you see. Nothing philosophic, nothing profound, but a simple thing. A child asks, "Mummy, what happened? Suddenly he is cold and totally immobile." "Yes, he is dead." The child is afraid to ask, "What is death?", because we teach the children to be afraid of death. All this nonsense of dressing up a corpse, putting rouge on its cheeks, giving it a shave before you take it to the burial, is because we are afraid of raw death. Even the corpse must be presentable. So, perfumery and lipstick don't remain only with the living! They go into the grave, too. So deeply established has this industry become, because of our fear. Why are we afraid to show our faces to society as we are? Because we are afraid that our face may not be acceptable. Therefore lipstick, rouge, I don't know what else, mascara, eye shadow, pencils, pens, inks, paper!

Where there is truth, where there is reality, there is no fear. My God, in me, has chosen me as his residence. Is that not sufficient reason for self-respect? If He, the Ultimate, the Creator, can condescend to descend into my heart, am I not blessed enough that I have to seek more blessings? If He, the Ultimate, the destroyer of everything, of ignorance, of foes, the mover of mountains, the creator of the sun and the moon and the stars — if He is within me, do I have to look outside for these things? What is the answer? To all these questions, the answer is, "No! If I have Him, it is enough." But today, you know, we need our credit card, and that makes us more confident in our travel. "Oh, have you enough money?" "Oh, I have my credit card, Chariji." But what about the credit card **there**, you see? Somebody made a joke. He got a MasterCard and he said, "Chari, I have a Master Card!" "But perhaps you need a Visa also, there!" So we keep two cards, a Visa card and a MasterCard. But will they get you **there**?

But if He, who is the creator of the universe, is in me, how can I be poor? How can I be destitute? How can I be friendless? All these things of which you are afraid, which makes us shun God because we are ignorant that He is there; therefore we look for Him outside, keep Him outside, conveniently, because a God inside is a nuisance, He is a demanding fellow. He says, "I have come, no doubt, but make the place fit for me to live in now! Clean it! I have come; that is my grace. What have you done to deserve that I come into your heart? Do your part. For me there is no guilt, ugliness, dirt, but **you** are still conscious of these things. Therefore you have to clean." Nobody tells a child to do cleaning before it comes. Do we ask our children to be cleaned before they come to the ashram? "Chariji, please give my child a cleaning. I am afraid its vibration may affect my spirituality!" You never say it, because all these are things in our consciousness — in reality they don't exist.

Spirituality says, that in reality, there is only one that is reality, and that is He. All the rest is **your** creation, including religion. Therefore, when we come to spirituality, religion has to end before spirituality can begin. Not because we are against any religion, but religion is a creation of a human being. It is not God-created. Therefore, everything from brothels to, what shall I say, basilicas, churches — everything has to go. Anyone who is in search of this ultimate truth, who wants to establish this ultimate presence in his heart as a living reality with which he is in contact, which guides him, and having whom, there is no more heaven or hell — for him it is right here, because where God is, that must be heaven. If He is in me, am I not already in heaven, that I seek another heaven somewhere outside? And if God is going to be with me even in hell, what have I to be afraid of? Because if God is there, it is a hell for others but not for me — it is still my heaven.

So you see, we have to get rid of all these funny thoughts, conceptions, religious nonsense, outright lies, and get on with the job of seeking the truth in us, the reality in us, which is what we are trying to do. I pray for all of you that you may be successful in this.

Thank you.

FEAR AND FORGIVENESS

YVERDON, SWITZERLAND

5 JANUARY, 1994

I have been trying to speak about religion and spirituality quite a lot. Today the thought occurs to me to talk about fear, not in the sense in which, for instance, the psychologists would speak about it, or the psychiatrists, but as a merely human emotion where fear of God drove us away from the **real** God within, to create gods of stone and metal outside whom we can worship as we choose.

I used to wonder what on earth they mean when they say, "God created man in his own image." It cannot be wrong, but it does not appear to be right, also. But when we come to the spiritual truth, that as we progress towards Him, shedding all our grossness, our forms, our names, and assume what Babuji calls the 'original condition', then it is true that God created us. Perhaps the word 'image' should be dropped and you should amend the statement to say, "God created us to resemble Himself," whatever that resemblance may be. The resemblance being even lack of qualities, lack of form, lack of names, lack of attributes — total lack of everything — one nothingness resembling another nothingness in being nothingness. Man chose to interpret this differently and created a god in his own image.

So, from the original essence, where it is true to say that God created man in His own image, we have come down to this travesty, to this vulgarity, to this obscenity, if I may say so, the ultimate blasphemy of man creating God in his own image. Anthropomorphic gods. Therefore our gods have two hands, two legs, two feet. There are male gods, there are female goddesses. They can be angry. They are supposed to be wise, lusty. You have only to look at the Olympian and the Greek stories of the Olympian gods lusting after girls on Earth and taking them up to Heaven for their pleasure. I mean, nothing that we have done, have we denied to the Gods of our creation. I don't think there is any more proof needed that our gods have been created by us, except to see a Thor throwing down his hammer in anger, or a Jove lifting up a woman from a garden in Rome, transposing our own very human, shall we say, banally human qualities to those gods. Perhaps it was an act of escapism. If my God is like that, how can I be other than him? If God is lustful, how can I be other than lustful? Did not God create man in his own image? If he is angry, can I be less?

So you see, we have brought about an invertendo of our own, created a heaven where they decide which is on the mountain tops, make them male and female. For God said, "Go forth and multiply," and we have gone forth and multiplied our gods and goddesses, so that in this world today there are, I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of gods and goddesses, all behaving not with any divine capacity, but with human stupidity — lust, foolishness, anger, greed, egotism — to the point where we made God say, "Thou shalt worship no other god but me." This statement tacitly implies that he is not the only god. If he was the only god, he could not say this. How could a god who is the only god say, "Thou shalt worship no other god but me"? Again here, man puts forth his own, or the woman puts forth her own, ambition, that her man should love only her and nobody else, or his woman should love only him and nobody else — transposed into the matrimonial vows in church: "We are bound together for eternity...," and all this blah, blah, blah. It is a convenient institution where, instead of God making us as Himself, we use that statement to justify our making God as **we** choose.

Therefore, we find that when spirituality stops, religion begins, because in spirituality there is love for God. Christ never talked of God as anything wonderful or superior. He only said, "My father in heaven." It was a father and son relationship — a filial relationship. And he had every right to say, "For my father and I," or even more arrogantly, "For I and my father are one." How can a son be anything other than his father? So you see, the truth, the verity, of the son and the father being the same: both divine, both blessed, both having the divine qualities of compassion, love, mercy, all these funny things.

Today we have become divorced entirely from that realm of spirituality. Fear entered the picture — fear of God. If Christ was crucified, it was because of fear. The Jews feared him. They hated him. Where there is fear there is hatred. Where there is hatred there is violence. Where there is violence there must be death. Therefore that poor fellow, born as Jesus of Nazareth, who wanted to be spiritual, who wanted to make everybody spiritual, who spoke of God as his father in heaven, who said, "Between Him and you there need not be any difference." All that you have to do is to do certain things, become more and more human, get in touch with Him through this formalised thing they called baptism, or whatever it is. But the established temples of the Jews, the synagogues, they would have lost their revenue. The priests would have lost their power. The Sanhedrin would have ceased to exist. The Romans were afraid because they didn't want anything upsetting their governments. So happened an act of betrayal, an act of criminality — where a poor fellow who did nothing but preach the goodness of mankind and the divinity of God, and the relationship between the two as father and son, he was judged to be a criminal, to be an impostor, and crucified.

The other day I said in Denmark that the Christian religion begins with betrayal. One disciple sold him, another disciple denied him, and then they all scattered. And then, perhaps out of feelings of guilt, Peter established a church — the Catholic Church, incidentally. And then along comes, as my son said in Denmark, Henry VIII, and when he couldn't have his choice of women and to divorce one, he said, "Who is the Pope?", and he set up his own religion.

So, man did not create God only in his image. He also created religions of his choice to suit the convenience of the moment. Along comes a Luther, along comes a Henry VIII, and along came so many other people who twisted and turned, you know, the teachings of the original founder, creating mutual hatred, mutual distrust.

So you see, if there are religions, it is because of fear. I was trying to be bold enough to say that religions have existed not because religions deserved to exist or needed to exist. They exist because we need them as a convenient sort of spiritual toilet into which to throw our rubbish, our sins, our guilt, and play this mockery of confession. Bowing before God, bribing him with some pennies on the plate, confessing to a priest who is himself a sinner, and indulging in all these ploys like children. So much so, religion has become children's play. Therefore nobody believes in it, and if today the churches are empty, they show perhaps a turn of the human being away from crass superstition and ignorance and fear of God, to what **may** once again become love of God.

Love of God can never create idols and stones. The love of God does not create any channel of worship. Adoration, yes. Worship, no. I can adore my father, but I don't worship my father. I love my father. I adore my father. I obey my father because I love him and adore him. Not because of the Ten Commandments of Moses. But if I need commandments to make me obey, then I am already halfway to becoming Lucifer, who became Satan through disobedience.

So you see, when we need to be frightened into obedience, or tempted into obedience, we have religions. And who is doing the tempting? We are tempting ourselves. Who is doing the frightening? Our guilt within us. The guilt in me drives me to the priest. That which is in me which is being tempted drives me to the priest. And they have a merry time, playing upon our too great a need for compassion, for forgiveness.

Babuji Maharaj said, "If you are afraid of something, you give power to that of which you are afraid." We were discussing about ghosts one night, at one AM in the morning. He said, "Parthasarathi, never be afraid of anything." I said, "Why?" He said, "If you are afraid, it opens the door to evil forces which will attack you." Then he started discoursing on ghosts, which I don't like, of which I am terribly afraid, and he said, "Are you afraid?" I said, "Of course I am afraid!" He said, "Even with me?" I said, "Yes, even with you here!" He said, "Why?" I said, "Because the fear is so deeply embedded in me." I could not, of course, tell him, "You don't look much like a defender!" If a ghost should come, one would hardly imagine Babuji as capable of fighting that ghost and driving it away, poor man! A denial of faith, you see. So, let us remember, not only Peter denied him, and Judas Iscariot denied his master, but we all deny our masters once or twice, perhaps more times, now and then, occasionally, many times.

This denial can go only when **faith** comes into play. And when can faith come? Only where there is love. When we are afraid of God, we can hardly claim to be religious. We are only running away from Satan, of whom we are afraid, towards a God of whom we are equally afraid, because we know this is a creation of man. Whether it be a Christ on the cross, or whether it be an idol in the temple, all this is only to protect me. The Devil is a very potent source of fear. People believe in the Devil more than they ever believed in God. It is not strange that today in Europe, there is a resurgence of witchcraft and things like that, because when you swing away from one side, you swing to the opposite. So, those who are afraid of God go farther and farther away from God, and perhaps end up at the other end of the spectrum, which is the Devil.

So you see, we have this funny idea that God and the Devil are opposed forces. Spirituality says, "Nonsense!" Where there is God, how can there be a Devil? Where there is light, how can there be darkness? Light and darkness are not opposite forces. The absence of light is darkness. To say, "I am in the darkness. I am in the darkness. Lead me into light," is silly. I have related somewhere my vision where I am afraid of the dark, and Babuji comes and his brilliance is there and there is no darkness. He says, "Where is the darkness?" I am unable to show him the darkness. It is not there. When there is light, how can there be darkness? Darkness is merely the absence of light. It is nothing in itself. The Devil is only the absence of God. By himself, there is no Devil. It is **our** creation, **our** imagination. And when we are afraid, I repeat, we open ourselves to all the forces of nature that can attack us.

It is a strange thing: that love opens the heart to all positive forces; fear opens the heart to all negative forces — you have no choice. The heart has to be open. If not, you will die miserably. To be born again and again, facing the Devil again and again, until **you yourself** dispossess yourself of that Devil, and come out into the light and say, "Well, I was stupid. I thought there was darkness, but there is light everywhere. I was in a small hole, burying my head like an ostrich in the darkness, in that stupid place there."

So you see, rebirth is nothing to be afraid of. Nobody can cast out the Devil in me unless I am willing to cast it out myself. No priest — nobody. No sorcerers, no witch — nothing. Because I am holding onto the Devil **myself** — it suits me to hold on to the Devil.

So, with an open heart there can be the divine possibility of all that is divine coming into me, flowing into me, through the universe, into the universe back again, using me as a conduit, as a door. Or it can be the other thing, through which the Devil slyly enters, pretending to be God and saying, "I give you all that is before you, dominion over this Earth, grandchildren of your grandchildren of your grandchildren you may see, such long life you shall have" — temptation.

So, instead of temptation coming from outside, temptation now comes from inside ourselves. "I can do anything. I can have anything. I can live as long as I choose." In a way, these dreams of scientists, of gene splicing, of extension of life by removal of disease, all these funny things which are going on in the field of science, research, reflect this devilish tendency in man to propagate or propel himself into the future. I am not anti-science. I am not anti-research. But anything which interferes with my progress towards God, divinity, and my becoming progressively more and more like Him until one day, I am so much like Him that I merge with Him — anything which interferes with that process is devilish, per se. And, if science is going to extend human life and keep us as miserable human beings here, with all our sinfulness and lust and grossness, well, we shall have the old stories recreated, like Frankenstein and the Wolfman, and I don't know what else.

We are creators of life. The ultimate arrogance, that now, today, we are able to create life. Man seeking to be God, without **becoming** like Him in any way. A play, an actor on the stage, pretending to be that which he can never be, and surely as anything will destroy itself, he will destroy himself.

So, it is a warning to scientists, if I am capable of giving such a warning, and if you are willing to hear such a warning: Do not play with life. I said, even people who think they are producing life when they have a baby — they are wrong. Life comes from outside. The father and the mother only give, or create, a space in which that life can come in and grow. Have you ever wondered how a mighty oak tree is in that small seed? Or a mighty elephant in a small seed? Who put it there? If you go to Agra in India, you will find people selling elephants in a small seed pod, twelve of them, fifteen of them, until the smallest is so small you can hardly see it, and we wonder how this man ever made this. But that is a human creation. Do we ever wonder how life has been compressed into such a tiny thing like a seed? We can make things big. Can we make them small?

So you see, miniaturisation, technologically, has been successful. The Japanese are eminently successful — micro-miniaturisation. But we don't go about producing mannequins this big. We must leave creation, evolution, in the hands in which it rightly belongs: creation in God's hands, evolution in our hands. Evolution towards a goal which is spiritual, not material, where I take charge of my evolution through teachings, through practices, available to us, through love of God, which means love of the Self. Because, after all, God is in me, as my Self. Therefore, I don't have to go to temples or churches. But that is precisely the God of which you are afraid, because He is **too** much your mentor, too much the witness of your deeds and misdeeds. Who can afford to have a God who is here [points to heart], watching everything I do, looking at everything I am doing, judging from inside, documenting?

Again, we come back to this conclusion, that it is a wonderful thing to have a god in a piece of stone or a wonderful bronze statue or a gold statue, worship him, come back, and be ourselves. Ourselves as we are, not ourselves, as we should be. I make this assertion out of long introspection, that religions have grown because of our fear of God. Perhaps Christianity was born out of the fear of having crucified Christ. It was an absolutely blatant crime, an inhuman crime, by people who called themselves religious: the bearers of the Old Testament, and prophets who had foreseen the coming of Jesus thousands of years earlier. But when he came, nobody recognised him. When he preached, nobody liked what he preached.

So, all the forces of evil, of self-perpetuation as merely stupid, silly, lustful, human beings — they converged together and crucified him. And to pay for that ultimate criminality and murder, they created the church, in some way trying to atone for the crucifixion of Christ. As an atonement, yes, perhaps it has some meaning. As a religion, I don't think it ever had any meaning. If it had, it has progressively declined, until today it has no meaning whatsoever. Now comes the point where we have touched the bottom, speaking about religions, and we have to start on our way back again.

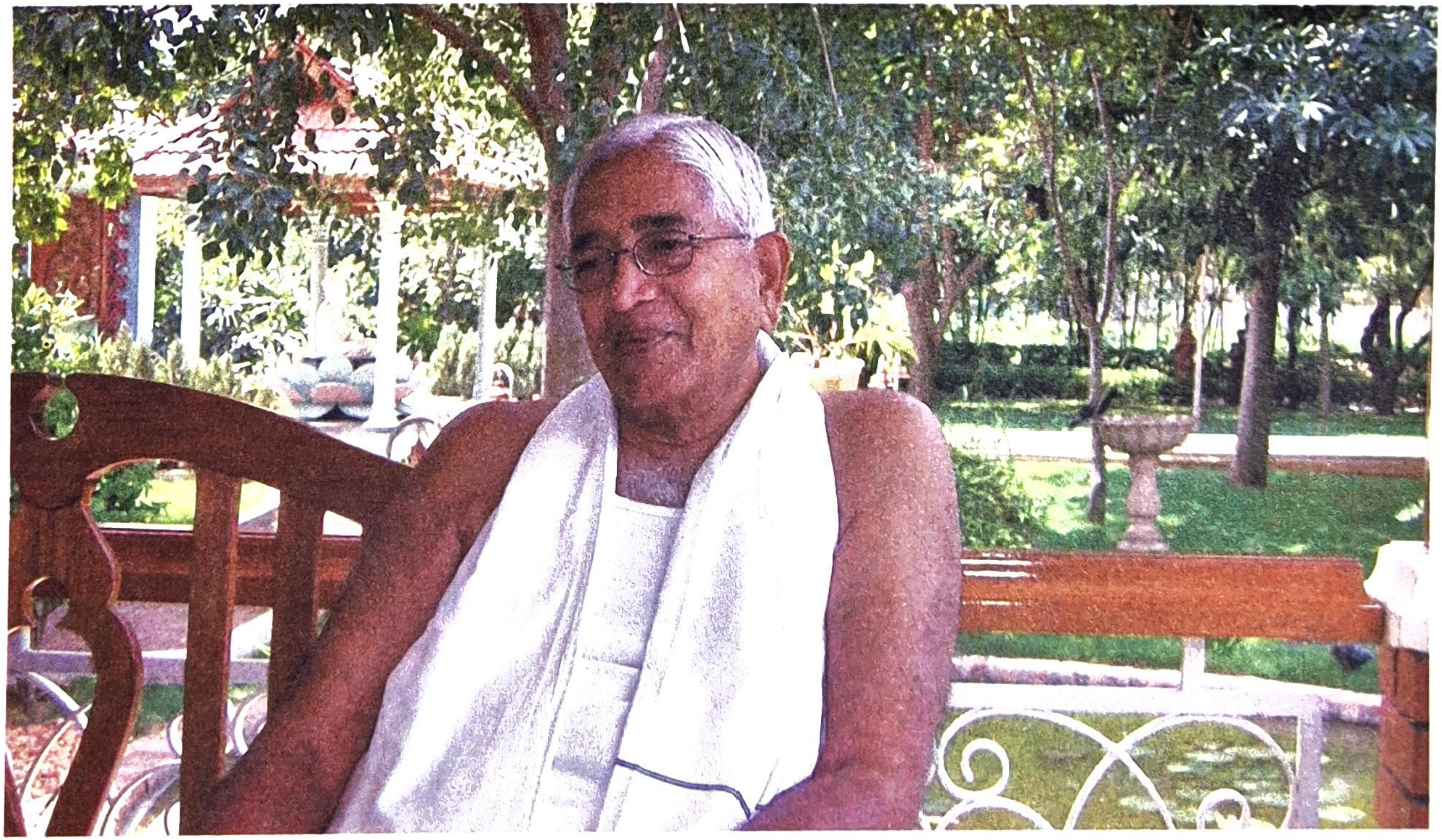
So, we owe a great debt to our Masters, Lalaji Maharaj and Babuji Maharaj, who have re-introduced spirituality into our life; made it possible for us not to be afraid of God, and therefore not to be afraid of ourselves; made it possible for us to love God, and therefore to love ourselves. Unnecessary to seek his mercy and his compassion, because we forgive ourselves from within. The God within me must say, "Don't worry. I have been with you through everything that you have done and undergone. I have suffered more than perhaps you have suffered. Yet I forgive you, for you did not know what you did." The famous cry of Christ: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This man from inside me is always saying, "I am prepared to forgive you. Even if you knew what you are doing, it doesn't matter, because you are too weak. You did not have the will power. Perhaps you did not have the discrimination, but now I make it possible for you to have all these things, acquire them all over again. Use your brain and your intellect for what I gave it to you for. Find your goal. Use your will power to go towards that goal. I forgive you."

Thank you.

II

South Africa

April, 1994



SURRENDER

LENASIA, SOUTH AFRICA

10 APRIL, 1994

The first question is, "To whom does the heart belong?" Because Manilalbhai said from **his** heart, but if we have given up our heart to the Master, then if at all the heart speaks, it must be the Master's heart which is speaking. If we believe that, then the person standing before you is nothing but his Master's voice — a dog, sitting before one of those old gramophones and listening to his master's voice and maybe letting out a bark or two in happiness and pleasure. I think the most fundamental mistake that we make is that we think everything that is with us or in us is ours. If you look at it logically, it is a ridiculous assumption. Because when I have eaten and my food is in my stomach, I no longer think of it as my food! It is my food only when it is outside. When it is inside me, it is no longer my food. So how can my heart be my heart? If it was outside, then it can be my heart. When it is inside me, it is part of me. I cannot dissect myself into pieces and say, "my intestines, my heart, my lungs, my liver." I think this a consequence of some sort of biological thinking, after we become concerned with ourselves because we are sick, because we suffer, and say, "Oh, my heart aches, my stomach is paining, my head aches, my heart palpitates," etc.

So, this 'my-ness' of the pieces which make me a whole, a human being, is a wrong concept. I have really nothing. When we are able to understand this — that my heart is not mine, it is me; my stomach is not mine. Because what is mine, I can always give away, but I don't think there can ever be a situation where I can take out my stomach and say, "Take it. This is yours," or my intestine and say, "This is yours." Of course, doctors may disagree, and say that today we can have kidney transplants, so am I not able to give away my kidney? But that is a medical reasoning. In a sense, we are a holistic being. Therefore, there is no point in saying, "I have given my heart to so-and-so." I think that is where this whole business of spirituality being a love story fails, because we are still partitioning ourselves and saying, "My head belongs to my professor. My heart belongs to somebody else. My stomach belongs to somebody else."

What I am trying to imply is that, either we give the whole self away at one stroke, or we can never give away anything. That is why all these love affairs — "My heart is yours. Your heart is mine." "*Tera dil, mera dil,*" you know, all these Hindi songs — nice to hear, but all trash, all, what should I say, emotional bunk.

Surrender means something more than giving your heart, realising that I am nothing without all that is making me a person. I cannot distribute myself piece by piece. I cannot do it sequentially — that today I give you my head, tomorrow I give you my heart, the day after tomorrow I give you my legs, and so on. Therefore, surrender is a complete process. It cannot be a bit by bit or a piece by piece process. So, when people said, "I have given my heart to the Master," my Master always used to smile. He used to smile very tenderly, very lovingly. Yet, you know, if you looked at his eyes, you always saw in his eyes a certain mischief and a certain sadness, that these people are lying, not only to him, but to themselves. How can you give away your heart without giving away yourself? And can you give yourself without giving your heart, too, with it?

So, surrender is not something we do, I repeat, piece by piece, but it is a once and forever process — it is finished. So, one who has surrendered as Babuji Maharaj surrendered to his Master — totally, in one stroke — because he has written that when he went to him at the age of twenty-two, or something like that, he never looked at anybody again. Now that is not the idea, that he did not see people, that he did not look at them, but in the sense that whatever he saw, he saw Master there.

Wherever he looked, he found his Master there, and for him the whole world, the whole universe, was his Master. At the age of twenty-two, mind you, he never looked back. Of course, he still led his family life. He had his wife, he produced his children, and what made all that possible was that he was able to do it in this Divine consciousness, in constant remembrance, which in a sense means that he never did anything, but it was his Master who did everything.

So, constant remembrance is a very potent instrument. When we do not have the physical presence with us, constant remembrance is not merely a substitute for the physical presence, it is a **superior** substitute. In fact, remembrance is **better than** the presence. In Hindi they say, "*Intzaar me jo mazaa hai wo milan me nahee hai*." [There is more fun in waiting than in the actual meeting.] "*Intzaar*" means waiting, hoping, expecting. We cannot hope and wait and expect without remembering the person for whom you are hoping and waiting and whose arrival you are expecting.

So, remembrance is a very spiritually potent thing. In fact, when the Master is physically present, I think we often slip into a mundane sort of level precisely because he is there and we don't have anything to do now, not even remember. How can you remember something who is before you? Often I have felt that the physical presence of the Master, though it is good in many ways — he transmits to us, he cleans us — yet it brings us several pegs down, precisely because the physical presence is so, what shall I say, deceptive. My Master said several times that his presence was deceptive, his simplicity was deceptive. If simplicity is deceptive in one, complexity can be deceptive in another. As one of our sisters said, she expected a short, weak fellow, and there was a six-footer like a football player before her. Now this is appearances that are deceptive.

On the plane coming from Bombay there was a swamiji, dressed in yellow robes with two of his *chelas* [disciples]. So, I felt within myself, "Here is some competition! [laughter] How shall we tackle it? How shall we tackle this competition?" You know, I always like to... All my life I have been meeting swamis, and I have never given way to them, because I know they are hiding behind their yellow robes a great deal of stuff which would be very open and visible were it not for the sanctimonious attire that they put upon themselves.

So, the physical presence is something we can judge, and law says, "You should not, you cannot, you must not judge the Master." Who are you to judge? What can you judge? How can you judge? Can a criminal judge the judge who is judging him in court? Can a student judge the teacher who is teaching him in class? Not possible, because otherwise he wouldn't be a student there; he would be the Master, and the Master would be your student. But the physical presence gives us this possibility — not the ability — this possibility that we judge him and say, "Oh, he is short," or, "He is tall." "He is weak," or, "He is strong." "He is poor," or, "He is rich." "He is educated," or, "He is not educated" — all the opposites of human existence, human qualities, human attributes. It has to be one or the other. You can have a small, handsome-looking short man, not educated, not knowing anything more than Hindi, or it can be a tall, uneducated man, knowing everything but Hindi. Or you can have someone who is a great physicist, a great linguist, like we had one man in India, I think he was a man who knew twenty-four languages absolutely fluently, and a poet to boot — but these things don't make Masters.

After all, all attributes are by comparison. There is no such thing as an absolute attribute. There is no person who is the tallest in this world. There is no person who is the most foolish in this world, too, or the most wise. When we understand that attributes are attributable only by comparison, they are relative, in fact, then what is it that can distinguish a Master? His height or his lack of it? His education or the lack of it? His knowledge of languages or the lack of it? His poverty or the lack of it? What? These are the things which become visible in the physical presence, and it is a sad story, because we tend to judge. I know people who have run away from Master because they see he is too frail. "How can he ever carry me where he is going?" Now here, this question of carrying becomes a mistake because we think in terms of carrying weights. How does a frail woman carry a baby? He says he is carrying, and of course he is carrying. So you see, if a frail woman can carry a baby around for nine months, what is the limitation on a Master's strength or weakness to carry all of us around? For I don't know how many eternities, he has been doing it.

So, the physical presence is a very great danger. It can be very attractive; it can be repulsive. It can be all-embracing; it can be not all-embracing. It can be appealing; it may not appeal at all. Therefore Babuji said that we should not fall into this trap of being attracted by the Guru's personality, his education, his wisdom — none of these things matter. The wisdom of the Guru is for **him** to handle. He needs to be wise in himself for **our** sake. **We** don't need his wisdom. He needs to be strong in a particular way, in which he can carry us from here to eternity. We don't need his strength, but we are always asking for Babuji's wisdom: "May Babuji confer his strength upon us. May Babuji give us his spiritual blessings." Instead of asking for Him, we are asking him for things which we think he has; perhaps he doesn't have any of them at all.

Many people said, "Babuji is illiterate because he studied only until five and a half classes." But then, to what do you attribute his great wisdom, his enormous wisdom? Now, to know that a comparatively unlettered man could nevertheless be the wisest, it needs wisdom on **our** part to understand this. To understand that an apparently frail human being who needed two people to lift him up out of his chair, but can yet carry the weight of this whole universe upon his frail shoulders, it needs understanding on our part, not on his. He has the capacity; we need the understanding. He has the wisdom; we need the understanding. He has the strength; we need the understanding. In substance, all that we need is understanding of the Guru's role in our life. But we tend to judge him: "Does he have this experience? Does he know how to do it? He is an Indian; what is he doing in South Africa, or Germany, or wherever it is? How is he going to tackle the European mind?" What European mind? What African mind? What Indian mind? The mind is the same. What is the difference between one human mind and another human mind? No difference. What is the difference between one human body and another human body? No difference. Then what is the problem for a Master to tackle a Japanese, or a Timbuktu-an, or somebody from Italy, or somebody from, I don't know, the North Pole? Because he knows the mind. We, by classifying and codifying, think that this mind is different from that mind, therefore, by Jove, he is going to have difficulties here! Does he know the African mind? Can he deal with the Zulus? Why not?

You know, I was once talking to a Sardarji-bhai in India, and they had some problems because you have a lot of Sikhs in our Mission (the people in the turbans that you see. Not 's-i-c-k', but 's-i-k-h'.) And their *Gurudwara* threatened to send them out of their *koum*, as we call it, their fraternity. So I said, "Please get me an invitation to speak in your Gurudwara. I will come and address your own gurus there." He said, "Are you serious?" I said, "What do you mean, 'Are you serious'? Of course I am serious!" He said, "But you know, your life may be in danger." I said, "It is not my life. It is my Master's, and he can manage his life." That sort of faith we need. It is easy to go where there is light, where there is safety, where you are sure of a welcome. But then, we have all read of the story of Daniel going into the lion's den. What is the use of a Daniel if he didn't go into a lion's den? What is the use of a Christ if he was not crucified? I mean, can you imagine Christianity existing without the crucifixion?

So you see, spiritual life calls for the ultimate sacrifice — your self. I am not talking now in cheap terms, like dying for your country. You know, any fool can stand in front of a bullet and get it into his chest. That is pride

— it may be national, it may be because of your colour, it may be because of your religion — it means nothing. But what Christ offered was his life. Are we prepared to give our lives? That is the true surrender. "I gave Master a donation of twenty-seven thousand rand." Good! Not bad at all, you see, but it is not surrender. A man who has twenty-seven million rand giving twenty-seven thousand rand — I mean, there's no charity involved there. It is just like throwing a beggar a coin! If you say you are Master's — "I am totally his," — then where is the question of your giving him anything? Everything is already his, isn't it? But people still believe they are donating, they are giving, they are sacrificing. Sacrificing what? A pittance?

So you see, the spiritual game is not an easy game. It is not a game at all. It is not a play. It is not a passion play. It is not a love play. It is a question of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's. I was never mine. If I was never mine, everything I earned was never mine, too. Everything I ever developed in myself was never mine, too. So, the fundamental error of thinking that, "I belong to me, myself, therefore what I earn is mine. Therefore, this house is mine, this car is mine, this land is mine." — basic errors in thinking. And how, at one stroke, to remove all these errors which stand between us and Him, whom we call Master, whom we may call God, whom you address as your beloved, in whatever way you choose to call him, is to say, "I am mine no more."

Surrender does not really mean giving yourself up to the Master, or anything like that. It is really a recognition of the fact that I was always His, but stupidly, I thought I was mine. Everything I had was His creation. Stupidly, I thought I had created them in myself. Everything I know is from his knowledge. Stupidly, I thought that I had learned at school and college what I have learned.

So you see, surrender is really an understanding from the heart that I was **always** His. There was nothing which was mine — not even me — therefore, it is called realisation. It is a realisation of a fact which has been existing from the beginning of time, or even before that. It is my ego which has differentiated between Him and myself, separated Him from me, put a *parda* [barrier] between us, maybe an iron curtain, and we have to break that down. Who has to do the breaking? Like this morning, I was explaining that the bride's face is veiled, but she will not know it. The loving hand of the beloved must move it. Once the face is allowed to be veiled, we have to uncover it. Therefore the husband goes, tenderly, removes the veil and gazes on the beauty behind the veil.

So, when you want to know the Master, after having separated yourself from him through eons of time, after egotistically thinking that everything is mine: "I created. I created. I created," now you have to follow this rather dangerous path of love. One lady used the analogy of a carpet being unrolled. It is a carpet being unrolled in space — there is nothing below it, there is nothing on either side of it. If you are to leave the carpet, you are in the abyss of nowhere, no-when. That is hell. If you are on it, you are like that boy with the flying carpet, you know, in the Arabic version of one of our stories, the carpet takes him wherever he has to go. Now, you cannot put your heart on the carpet and let it fly, or leave your heart at home in your *tijori* [safe] and put your body on the carpet and let it fly — it just cannot happen.

So, you must go with everything that you are and you have. Therefore, I repeat, surrender is a totality. It cannot be bit by bit. It cannot be piece by piece. It cannot be attribute by attribute. It must be a total, once and for all, one-time affair, after which, if you exist at all, you exist notionally. He says, "Go," you go, but you are no more thinking that, "I go." He goes. Whither thou goest, there I follow — not at all! **He** goes now. It is no longer the disciple who walks, but it is the Master who walks. For such a disciple, he doesn't exist. So who goes? In the form of the disciple, in the shape of the disciple, in the body of the disciple, the Master goes everywhere.

To understand these things, we have to go a little beyond our learning of books, substantially beyond what we think of love, very much beyond what we think of surrender. Surrender is not giving. Surrender is not renouncing. Surrender is not throwing away. Surrender is a moment of awakening, a dawning of understanding that what is His, what was always His, has again become His.

Thank you.

TOWARDS INFINITY

Lenasia, Johannesburg, South Africa

12 April, 1994

I feel like going back to the fundamentals of Sahaj Marg, because often we remember what we read last or heard last, but we forget the basics. Like when we look at the tree, we see the trunk and the foliage, but we don't know about the roots. Babuji Maharaj has said that the body lives by the soul. Of course, we all think that the body lives by the food that it eats and drinks, which is a wrong idea. Because, however much you may eat and drink, when the soul leaves the body, the body is flat. So, all that we take in and throw out is only to keep the body fit, so that the soul may inhabit it and go through this life to reach the other shore, as we call it in Hindu philosophy. Crossing the shore from this side to that side, the ocean of life.

So, the body is only a vehicle. One of the famous Upanishads speaks of the body as nothing more than a vehicle. It is a chariot. How much attention should we give to it? How well should we look after it? A sensible answer would be, it is like maintaining a car — just fit enough to drive me around, and to be left when we don't need it any more. Then Babuji said, as the body lives by the soul, the soul, too, lives by something else. The common idea that the soul is eternal is, of course, right. There is no question about it. It is not born. It never dies. But without sustenance, it seems to go into some sort of sleep.

Somebody referred yesterday to a quotation. It was not Vivekananda who said it; it was the Vedas. Vivekananda only repeated it. "*Uthtishthata jaagrata praapya varaan nibothata.*" ["Arise, awake, and then realise yourself going to the chosen One."] "Arise, awake, and rest not till the goal is achieved." Really, this exhortation is addressed to the soul, not to the body. Most of us think it is addressed to the body. So, we set our alarms, wake up at five, or shut it off and go to sleep again, and wake up at seven and try to meditate, so we have done *uthtishthata* [arisen] and we have done *jaagrata* [awaken], and we hope that by the mercy of the Almighty, we will also do the last part of it, *praapya varaan nibothata*. That is a very superficial, very material interpretation or meaning given to that famous Vedantic statement. It is really addressed to the soul. "O soul, you are asleep. Wake up! Arise and start moving." These three ideas are implicit in Sahaj Marg. Without these ideas there is no Sahaj Marg. Babuji Maharaj said that, with the first transmission that a person receives in this system, the soul is awakened. It is called the awakening of the soul — *jaagrata*.

So you see, the very first sitting achieves for us, or creates in us, the ability to do what we have not been able to do, presumably over many lives. Because, had we been awake and had we risen up and walked towards the goal, we would not have needed that transmission from the Master. So, the Vedic exhortation comes alive really and truly. In India, it came alive with the re-introduction of the Sahaj Marg tradition of yoga by Lalaji Maharaj. He rediscovered this lost system, this ancient system, supposed to have been lost eighty generations before Raja Dasharath, and made it possible once again for us to obey the Vedic injunction, "Arise, awake, and move on towards the goal."

So, real progress comes only with this first sitting. Or, to put it in another way, it begins with the first sitting. It does not end there. Of course, Babuji said that if there was a person who could co-operate totally, the first sitting could be the last, too. But then he also added that life would end, and he did not want to give us *videha mukti*. He did not want us to have mukti after death; he wanted us to have mukti while we are yet alive.

So, it is his mercy and his generosity that keeps us alive, because we have received, I don't know how many hundreds or thousands of sittings, and in a sense, Babuji Maharaj, Lalaji, they have gifted us with the continuance of material existence so that we may continue on this planet, fulfilling our duties, living our material lives for the duration that was planned before we started Sahaj Marg. I am bold enough to say that, given the effectiveness of the Sahaj Marg system, most of us would not be here today alive in the traditional sense, but for the grace of the Master. We are all thinking of mukti, liberation, realisation, *layavastha,* as being made possible by the grace of the Master. No doubt about that; it is true. But the greater gift is that he lets us live here in the material plane, with our loved ones, saying that, "I do not interfere with what Nature has already planned as your terrestrial life. Continue to live it." But I think therein he has implanted a great hazard into the system, because it gives us the opportunity, like wild sheep, to stray. Even those who have been raised to the highest levels, the central region, they should have continued with the tradition, but many of them have fallen by the wayside, much to my regret, much to my Master's sorrow, and I suppose Lalaji also weeps, because perhaps they think it was a mistake, and that it should have been right and proper to have terminated the human existence when its spiritual goal had been achieved.

So you see, the greatest mercy of the Master is in our continued physical terrestrial existence, and you are not aware of this. And if you aware that it is a gift from him, you would treat it like any other gift — cherish it, preserve it, and look after it. You would not use it flippantly, erroneously, crazily. I remember I asked Babuji Maharaj once, when he told me that my goal had been achieved by Lalaji's grace. I said, "Then, Babuji Maharaj, why don't you finish me off?" He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, continued existence could be a danger, especially when you know you have reached the goal."

I remember seeing a movie some thirty years back about some high-explosives having to be moved, I think, from Italy to Germany or something like that. It could only be transported by truck. It had to be carried in special containers. There had to be no shock, because the least shock would explode the container. Truck after truck undertakes the journey and they all explode on the way. For transport of one truckload of this one very essential chemical, the price offered was in those days, I think, twenty thousand Deutschmarks or something like that, which was big money. One driver does make it. He delivers his consignment at the destination, and coming back he is so happy — he has twenty-thousand Deutschmarks in his pocket, he has delivered his consignment, his truck is empty, he is going back home. In his happiness, he does a crazy thing: while passing through the Brenner Pass in the mountains, he goes like this, swinging, lets go of the handles, whistling, you know, doing everything, and he goes over the mountainside and crashes to his death. It is a very real danger, this life of ours which is so full of potential for our rising to the highest possibilities of human achievement, human growth, is also fraught with the greatest dangers of falling to the lowest levels of degradation.

So, that is by way of caution to all of you, that as we rise higher and higher, the more we can fall. One standing on the ground will not fall a great deal, probably a little bleeding of the nose. Falling from the first floor — dangerous. Falling from the seventh — sure death. The higher we rise, the greater the fall. How low have the mighty fallen! The low is always here. How low have the mighty fallen — because they have risen so much, therefore they are falling so much.

But Babuji, when I asked him, "Why don't you finish me off?" said, "I have not raised you to my levels just for your pleasure and your satisfaction and your fulfilment of your goal. You have now to work. And to work, you have to be alive." This sentence needs to be repeated forcefully: "To work, you have got to be alive." Alive in the sense of physical existence, living here in the flesh. No one can work from the non-material spheres. This truth Babuji Maharaj said about the living Guru, the living Guide. This truth the Vedas have said, that "*Deivam maanusharupena*" — that the Lord Almighty Himself has to work through the medium of the human being. God cannot work directly on this universe. Not even God. Therefore, the *avatars*, therefore the saints, therefore the Masters, who are all to be considered as representatives of God on earth, through whom the Divine spirit works.

It is very necessary to understand this exactly, this concept of the worker of the Divine way on earth having to be alive in flesh and blood. It is very necessary to understand this. Otherwise, we will become like the great monotheistic religions of this world — Christianity, Islam, Judaism — we become hardened into nothing more than idolaters. When there is no living spirit which we can worship and before which we can pray, it is idolatry. Idolatry does not mean having an idol made of stone or metal or wood. Idolatry can be conceptual, it can be intellectual, it can be a mere idea. A bare stone wall in front of you is no less an idol than the idol of Lord Vishnu or Shiva. Why a bare stone wall? Why a stone wall at all? Why facing the west? Why not the north, the east, the south? Very subtle form of idolatry, but nevertheless idolatry, and the subtler the mistake, the subtler the error, the more dangerous its results — intolerance, violence, stupidity.

So you see, idolaters are not only people who worship God with a form and a name. Babuji Maharaj has expressed his fear that Sahaj Marg should not descend into idolatry. Really speaking, it would have been idolatry had we worshipped, not Babuji Maharaj, but Lalaji Maharaj. We should, rightly speaking, worship only Lalaji Maharaj. Babuji was only a creation of Lalaji. All this blah-blah about special personality — who knows what is a special personality? You don't even know what is a governor! You don't know what is a king. How do you know what is a special personality?

So you see, again this is idolatry, that without knowing what it is, we worship it. So Babuji said this system should be preserved in its pristine purity. Never should idolatry come into it, idol worship come into it, and only a living *parampara*, as we call it in Hinduism, a living tradition, a living hierarchy, a living stream of reality can ensure that. Therefore, this system, if it is to continue into the future, must have living Masters till the very end. You know, it is like the presidents of the United States. I don't know how many you have had — forty-three? — something like that. You can't say the first president would be the president of the United States for all time. "We rule in the name of George Washington," or whoever it was.

So you see, as a country cannot have the first president and the last president in one personality, as a family cannot have the first father and the last father in one person. So, too, a spiritual system cannot have the first guide and the last guide in the same person. Buddhism, too, has made this mistake. Nobody after Buddha. Jainism, too, has made this mistake. Nobody after sixty-second or the seventy-second *tirthankara* — Mahavira, the Jain. When you stop like that, it is like a family coming to an end which has no more male children. That *parampara* is finished, that dynasty is finished.

So, Sahaj Marg must be correctly understood, correctly applied. What is it that gives Sahaj Marg substance? See, our body is supported by the skeleton. Without the skeleton we would be like jellyfish — no form, just wobbling around, I suppose. The Sahaj Marg system, too, has a skeleton — the Mission. If the Master is the life force, the living force behind the system, the Mission is the skeleton that supports, and the method, I suppose, is something akin to what we take in, utilise for our existence. So, the whole thing has to come from inside. Support has to come from inside. Everything that we eat and drink has to be digested inside, absorbed inside, waste products thrown out. Babuji Maharaj said even thoughts are nothing but things which the mind receives and throws back out as thoughts. What is not good for us, what is not bad for us — everything goes, you see. Because if a

told you the truth you would not believe me. They are nowhere as far as the Sahaj Marg hierarchy is concerned." And yet they meditated twenty-two thousand years, twenty-five thousand years, and Vasishta calls Vishwamitra the Brahmarishi, and these Brahmarishis are not worth even a mention in Babuji's works? And we worship them? And we have their *gothras* — Vishwamitra gothra, Vasishta gothra, Kashyapa gothra. See how much we have been misled by relying on tradition? Because tradition is like a fossil, a dead thing, solidified, existing today to remind us of what we were, not what we are. It pertains to the past, not to the present, not at all to the future.

So you see, meditation by itself is no use. Regulation of the mind — then what? Can the mind lead you to God? No, because God is not an object about which you can think. So, what will the mind do with God? Nothing. The regulation is for the purpose of giving us a certain control over our own actions, our own thoughts, our own deeds, so that we can regulate our life in the way appropriate to be called a *saadhak* — abhyasi. Cleaning is very important because it makes this heart, this vessel of ours, the vessel or the home in which divinity can reside, clean and prepared for its occupation.

How does that divinity enter us? The divinity is already there, says the Veda. But he is sleeping. A sleeping God is of no use to us. When the house is burning a sleeping husband is no use to us; he will also burn with the house. Therefore you wake him up, and if the fellow is drunk, God help us. He will burn faster because of the alcohol in him!

So you see, this fellow who is sleeping inside — the *antaryamin*, as we call him — 'He who is residing inside', has to be woken up. Meditation takes care of regulation of the mind. Cleaning prepares. Now comes the tremendously necessary and important job of waking up the sleeper, of awakening the sleeper — transmission.

So you see, this is a three-pronged business, Sahaj Marg. Therefore the first sitting — the first shake of the husband or the wife — even wives sleep late nowadays! Gone are the days where the *patni* [wife] of the house woke up at four o'clock and greeted her just-awake husband, already bathed, already with the *choolha* [stove] lit and with coffee ready. Today it's the other way around sometimes.

Anyway, this first transmission does something: awakening of the soul. Then the subsequent transmissions are feeding that awakened baby of the soul, because it is still a child in me. It feeds him and feeds him and makes him an adult. Then you have a strong inner self, and then comes the possibility of having inner strength. Yesterday, somebody was referring to inner strength. "Please give us inner strength." Nobody can give you inner strength. Somebody may be able to give you outer strength, give you a stick, give you a gun, but that is not your strength. The strength is of the gun; the strength is of the stick, or the strength is of the dog. If the dog runs away you are lost. If the stick falls from your hands you are lost. If the gun has no bullets you are lost.

So you see, external strength is meaningless because it can be taken away from me. Inner strength cannot be taken away from me. It is inside. Nobody can touch it, nobody can corrupt it, nobody can weaken it. Perhaps I am wrong in saying 'nobody'. Nobody except myself can weaken it; nobody except myself can corrupt it; nobody except myself can take it away from me, because in my ignorance I can do all these things.

So you see, these three activities of the sadhana of Sahaj Marg are interlinked. "Why continue this meditation?", somebody can ask. "Even after the mind is regulated, why do I still need to meditate?" Because the mind now becomes capable of receiving higher wisdom, so that my only enemy who can remove this inner strength from me is myself, and my wisdom will prevent that from happening. Why continuous cleaning? Because, until such time as I have such a mind, under such rigid regulation of myself, that no external thoughts can enter into it except that of the Master, there is bound to be a certain uncleanliness deposited in me every day by my thoughts and actions, which has to be systematically and deeply cleaned out.

So, till the very end, meditation is essential, cleaning is essential, transmission is essential. Some of our friends, brothers who reached the Central Region said, "Oh, I don't have to meditate any more." The enemy has come into the open: himself or his self — lower self. Somebody said, "I am so clean, I don't need to clean myself any more." The enemy has come out a second time. When they stop both cleaning and meditation, the thing that comes out of themselves is the very devil. And now, because they are so suffused with their own thought of their own highness, their own elevation, which the Master **said** had happened, and does not continue to say. It is significant that one of the persons to whom I am referring has been able to show letters from the Master up to the period of, I think, 1956 or 1957; thereafter he has not shown any of the letters from the Master. Surely there were letters.

Achievement in the past is no use. Here, it is a rigorous exercise of continuing to follow the path every day — left, right, left, right — we keep marching, no stop. "But you said there is a goal." Yes, there is the goal. Twenty steps farther and you ask the Master, "Now where is the goal?" There is the goal. Hundred steps more, you are tired and you say, "Where is the goal?" There is the goal. How many times will you ask? "Yes, but Master, you said, 'There is the goal' there, 'There is the goal' there, and 'There is the goal' there." He said, "Yes. There is the goal here, too!"

So you see, there is no end. That is why the Master said, "Towards infinity." This is an endless path, but we are encouraged to follow it because there is that frail old man who is going with us. The only utility of our own ego — at least for me it was that, you see. I was arrogant, proud, egotistic, and when Master said, "Farther and farther," first I thought the fellow was cheating, then I thought he was just sort of seducing me into following him, and when he finally made it apparent, obvious to me that there was really a goal, I said, "If this old fellow can do it, surely I can do it, too." My ego came to my rescue. Without my ego I would have been lost. So, a certain amount of ego is essential to all of us. If not for anything else, at least for the purpose of saying, "If this five-foot no-inch, twenty-seven kilos fellow can do it, what about this lion?" A lion beaten by a lamb? At least to that extent, we must have our ego and our arrogance intact. Then we can follow, because he is going always a step ahead — difficult to keep up with him, even physically.

Once we were going for a British visa in Madras, the High Commission building. The British High Commissioner was on the third floor. Babuji started walking; I followed. And he went beyond the third floor, fourth, and he was at the fifth, and I was struggling to go up to the third. When I reached the third I found he was missing. I went into the High Commission. He was not there, so I went up and he was standing on the fifth floor. He said, "Where is it?" I said, "Babuji, we have come too far!" I had to take him back down to the third floor and we got our visas. You see, even physically it was not possible for me to keep up with him. What to talk of spiritually?

So, this inner strength must come through transmission, repeated transmission. And when people say, "This fellow is here in South Africa for fifteen days. *Mama mia,* how am I going to have all the sittings? Is it necessary, really?, I say, *"Kyon, Chotubhai?"* Chotubhai says, *"Soo karoo. Kahe chhe na? Tame poochi lo!"* ["What can I do? He is saying so, isn't it? Why don't you ask him?"] And the other fellow says, "No, no, let us go to Rasikbhai. *Tame to* center-in-charge *cho na*?" ["You are the Center-in-Charge, isn't it?"] Rasikbhai says, "Yes, yes. I also think so, but what to do? We have called him. We made the first mistake!" [laughter]

So you see, every sitting is important. This is not something which is incremental, that you put brick on brick on brick and build a wall. Here, there is something which goes into the whole structure and lifts it up. So we cannot say, "Today the brick which I did not put on the wall, I shall put tomorrow." Not possible. What is lost is gone in the limbo of time.

So you see, Sahaj Marg, three things: meditation, cleaning, and what else? Constant remembrance. Three prongs. The *trishul* [trident] of Shiva, we can remember it by. All three are essential till the death, till the absolute very end. In fact, Hinduism says that when we die, when the last moment comes, if we have already done our sadhana in the right way, benefited by it in the proper way that we should, we will know when we are going to leave this body and we will sit in meditation, and in meditation we shall leave this body. People will think we are still sitting in meditation — two hours, three hours, four hours. Then anxious relations will come and say, "What is this? This fellow's been sitting for four hours," and the body will fall. The spirit has left.

The true body leaves the body only in meditation. Therefore constant remembrance ensures that, whether you are conscious of the moment of death or not, or when it is going to come, because we are not soothsayers, we are not astrologers, we are not seers, nevertheless constant remembrance will ensure that that moment of death cannot catch me on the wrong foot, because I am in His remembrance. Therefore my soul will still leave my body as the ancient souls of the ancient *rishis* left — in meditation.

So, constant remembrance is a very potent thing. It assumes more and more importance as we grow older, because death draws nearer and nearer, and you should not be caught thinking of other things at that moment, when the Master comes and says, "Come, it is time to leave." We cannot be thinking of Rama and Govinda and Krishna, you know. We have to be thinking of Him who is our Master, our guide, our goal, all put together.

Therefore, dear sisters and brothers, please remember that Sahaj Marg is very easy, not difficult, provided we understand its fundamentals clearly, provided we practise the three elements systematically, regularly, with dedication to ourselves. Obedience to the Master here is only for **our** benefit. He gains nothing whether you obey him or disobey him. I mean, in slang I would say it doesn't matter a damn. But to you it matters a lot. Again, in slang, it matters a hell of a lot! It can mean the difference between hell and heaven.

Thank you.

PROPER USE OF PRAYER

Lenasia, South Africa

16 April, 1994

This business of prayer that Jayashri was mentioning — I have said so many times that, really I don't like prayer. I mean, it's one thing to do the prayer of Sahaj Marg: "Oh, Master. Thou art the real goal of human life." But, to pray for anything, to me has always seemed as casting an indignity upon the Master or God, whatever you want to call him, because when we have this faith that He knows what we need, it is not merely absurd, but it is disrespectful to remind Him about it. He knows his job and we should leave it to Him. In general, we pray for things we should not have. That is why I deliberately used the example of whisky.

So, to me, prayer has been anathema. I don't like to pray. I had this argument with Babuji himself. He said, "You should pray." I said, "No." I said, "Why? You are there to pray for me!" [laughter] He seemed to appreciate the joke, but he continued to say, "Yes, but you should still pray." I said, "Well, if you say so." Obedience.

So, we should always be conscious of this fact, that we are praying for things which we want. We never pray for things which we need. And in Sahaj Marg we have this philosophy or guarantee that needs will be fulfilled, not wants. And our needs can be so few — a roof over the head, good water, simple food — you don't need to earn much money for these things. But today we find people are praying for money, for success in business, for wealth, for a beautiful wife. And when you pray for a beautiful wife, you know what you get. You get in deep trouble!

Somebody was saying yesterday, you know, desire for land, desire for gold, desire for women — three things which have been the bane of human life ever since the dawn of creation. And he added one thing which was very pertinent. He said that desire for women is the cause of desire for the other two things — land and gold. So, sometimes one has to question the wisdom of God Almighty in creating two sexes, but it must be necessary, therefore He did it. What follows is, that we should not have desires; we should have love. If you love your wife, discipline becomes easy. If you desire your wife, discipline is impossible, because desire is a flame which consumes everything. Love? We can have the courage to tell our wives, "Sorry, the buck stops here. You want a sari? Yes, I will buy you one. Good, simple sari. Silk sari costing 6,000 rupees? Sorry. Sari? No. Sorry? Yes!" [laughter]

So you know, it is really love which makes discipline possible. Now your child comes and says, "Daddy, daddy, I want this gun." And because you have money you buy him an AK-47 and he wants to shoot you! He wants to try it out, no? What's the use of a gun if you can't shoot it? He wants a knife — one of these Rambo knives. Even I was almost tempted into buying one, but then I thought, "What would I do with it?"

Now follows the second thing: we should want things with which we can do something. But, we don't know what to do with them, so we keep them, so we become *godowns* [warehouses]. Even mentally, even intellectually, people are so fond of knowledge that we read every foolish stupid thing that every stupid fool has said throughout the history of humanity, and we don't know what to do with that knowledge. Libraries — okay, every town needs a public library, but why should it be a private library in your head? You confuse Islam with Buddhism, Buddhism with Christianity, Christianity with religion, and as our sister said, religion and spirituality. What is the difference?

So, if you cannot know even the difference between religion and spirituality, educated people, what have you really studied? What has been your real education? Again, you know, in reading there must be discipline. Some people say, "Oh, I have a catholic taste. I read everything." It's like an animal which says, "I have a catholic taste. I eat everything." It's not possible.

So, we must have a specific goal, and a specific goal means specific needs. Because, every road cannot lead to Rome. That is a foolish statement, framed by the arrogant Caesars, who thought everything began and ended with Rome.

So, you see with what we have ended up. Discipline is necessary everywhere, and the greatest disciplinarian is God. God is love. Which is true, but does God love me? Questionable, because He does not recognise individuals. I am absolutely convinced about this. He just broadcasts waves of, what shall we say, goodness? I would say divinity, because a rose cannot give out anything except its own fragrance. A jasmine cannot give out anything except its own fragrance. And God cannot give out anything except His own fragrance, His own light, His own discipline. You cannot expect moonlight from the sun, and if you prefer the moon to the sun, it is stupid, because without the sun, the moon doesn't exist.

So, reflections can be soft, you see, but the reality is warm, hot, fiery, and we have to keep our distance from it to be warm and not too hot, and if you get closer, it is possible to be burned. The truth is like that. One who is prepared to be burned into cinders can approach truth. Otherwise, it is better to stay away from it; it is better to love truth than try to be truth.

So, from God what can we expect? Nothing, except Him. He has no money, so how can He make you richer? He has no health; how can He make you stronger and healthier? He has no wisdom; how can He make you more wise? He is nothing. Therefore, if He has to give you something, it is only the nothingness that He is.

Nothing in this world can give you anything except itself. A fool will give you his foolishness. A robber will teach you how to rob well. A prostitute will teach you how to walk the streets. If you ask a prostitute, "Where is the temple?" she will laugh at you; and if you ask a worshipper from the temple, "Where can I find the red-light district?" he wouldn't know.

So, we make this mistake of asking things from people and persons and God Himself, what they cannot give to us. The mistake is ours. For all the misery in our lives, **we** are responsible. Because you go to a rich man for advice, he can give you money but he cannot give you advice. If you go to a philosopher for money, he can give you advice but not money.

So you see, the need to discipline our own minds to this idea, to this consciousness, that I can get nothing from a thing except what it is in itself. It is all right to quote Shakespeare, but sometimes I think he was a damn fool, too. Books in brooks, sermons in stones — the wise man finds them, but the brook doesn't give us the book, nor do stones preach sermons at us. If you are already wise, then everything can teach you what you want to be taught. But then I don't need! The wise man doesn't have to go to the brook to find a book, and ask a stone to preach a sermon.

So you see, even these great writers, poetic writers, have played with words, and that's why Babuji was always very suspicious of poetry. He did not like poetry. He said, "Poetry is a play. They don't tell you the truth. They think how to beautify a thing, not how to present the truth." And let me assure you, that unless you are bold enough to accept the truth, truth is a bitter thing. There is no beauty in truth. There is no beauty in God.

All this idolatry that we have in our temples is because they make beautiful idols, lovely idols of marble, beautifully carved. I went to the Shiva temple yesterday because the priest invited me. Lovely idols, you see. Nataraja, the lord of the universe, in his *thaandava nritya*, the dance of destruction. And yet you worship there.

So, we are worshipping not really God, but beautiful images. Make it an ugly image, and nobody would go there. In a temple, if you are not looking at the idol, you are looking at the girl standing on the other side of the queue and wishing she were in your bed. In India we have this queue system, you know, two rows of bars, men on one side, women on the other. And they are each looking at the other, and the priest is mumbling away something because he couldn't care a damn. God doesn't hear him, you don't hear him, so what has he to pray for, or what has he to mumble except some mumbo-jumbo? He starts out sincerely, *"Om namashivaya,"* but he sees everybody looking at each other, and he's sure of his pennies on the plate, because after all we want that to bribe the deity. "God, take this eight annas and let me have the man of my choice," or "God, take this five rupees. It is much more than that eight annas, and let my profits double next year." And like many businessmen, God is even made a partner — two percent of the profits go to God. Imagine this ugliness, this hypocrisy, this cheating, this bribery of your own Creator. Two percent of profits to God! As if God is going to be tempted and immediately make you a *crorepati* [millionaire]. Into which account will you put this two percent?

This priest in the temple was yesterday telling me that he was shocked when he went to the Meenakshiamman temple in Madurai, one of the biggest temples in India. The priest told the worshippers, "Please don't put the coins in the *hundi* [collection box]; put it in this plate," because if you put it in the hundi it goes to the temple authorities; in the plate it goes to the priest.

So, there is no such thing as religion. It is lost. It ended long ago. It ended perhaps when temples began to be built, because that was the first corruption. So, to idolise God, to make God into stone and marble and gold and silver or wood — that was the first fall. Not today. We have only been carrying on that tradition of corruption and idolatry perhaps for the past five or six thousand years. And this is magnified because in our stupid Puranas, Rama goes to Lanka, but before that, at Ramesvaram, he creates an idol of Shiva from the sands, and worships there. How can it be wrong to worship a Shivalinga if Lord Rama himself did it? So, you see how our Puranas and our *itihasas* [histories] have corrupted our thinking. Rama worshipping Shiva, Shiva worshipping Narayana, Narayana worshipping somebody else. Mohini — you know, this idea of a woman being the ultimate temptress.

Even in your Puranas you write this. Not only Vishwamitra and Menaka, but when this fellow, one Asura comes and prays, and does *tapasya* [askesis] to Shiva, then Shiva finally has to appear, because they are like these cigarette vending machines — you put the right coin and press the right button, and you get the right cigarette! These gods and powers have no senses. They are stupid, they are foolish, they are idiotic. An Asura does tapasya, and Shiva comes before him. "Yes, my son." He says, "I want a boon." "Yes, what?" "On anybody's head, if I put my hand, he should be burned to ashes." "So be it," Shiva says.

Now, like the child with the AK-47 which it wants to try out on his father, this Asura wants to try it on Shiva himself. Shiva runs for life, and this blighter is chasing him. Shiva doesn't know what to do, so he goes and falls at Vishnu's feet — another god. Vishnu says, "Wait. I will relieve the situation," so he turns himself into a most beautiful temptress, Mohini. Now this Asura stops, looks at Mohini, and [whistles]. And she says, "Yes, what can I do for you?" "You know what I want." She says, "Yes, but first you must bathe and come to me clean." So he bathes. Then she says, "Did you do your *sandhyavandanam* [prayers]?" He says, "What is it?" She said, "Sit down, I will teach you." So, there is mantra after mantra, and at one stage you have to put your hand on your head and repeat the mantra. He does it and he burns himself to ashes!

So, the power of God is through temptation. He has to become a temptress. So, temptresses cannot be bad if Vishnu himself became Mohini and tempted this Asura.

How can it be bad for any of you here to tempt somebody? So, we have religious authority, religious sanction for bribery, for corruption, for the granting of stupid, silly, idiotic, destructive boons. I don't think any of our Gods had any wisdom. Thank heavens, Babuji said, "God has no mind," because only a mindless fool can do such things. Strong words? It is in your Puranas, not in me.

So, don't go to these Puranas and these ridiculous, you know, "Shivapuranam, Divyaprabandam." I asked at the temple, why they read all these things. They don't know Tamil, so they have translated it into English. Now they don't know how to pronounce it. I met a boy here yesterday or day before who didn't know what his name was. He said something like 'Pashnivas', and he said, "You must know what it means." I said, "Pashnivas? There is no Tamil name like Pashnivas. Please spell it." He said, "P-A-Z-H-N-I." "Aha. Pazhani!" His name must be Pazhanivel, you know, the *trishul* [trident] that Lord Muruga has. He doesn't even know his own name — Pashnivas! If he is here, please don't feel upset, because this is a necessary example. How can you know God's name if you don't even know your own name? But Babuji says, "Forget yourself." You are not Pashnivas, you are not Pazhanivel — you are nothing.

So, if at all you should pray to God, what should you pray for? For what He can give us. And what is that? Nothing but Himself. When you want beauty from your wife, can she separate the beauty and give it to you and leave herself somewhere else? Of course, many people do it — they leave their heart with one man and their bodies with a second, and they're praying like hell to God: "Please forgive me for this bifurcation of something which cannot be bifurcated, for the separation of something which cannot be separated. I and my heart are one. I cannot leave my heart with one and myself with another." Is it possible? Where it is possible it is called prostitution.

I always like to use hard, harsh words, because without a knife a surgeon cannot operate. You cannot have a surgery with just cotton. Sharp scalpels, piercing instruments, so that in one stroke, it is opened. Otherwise, like the army doctors who are famous in India, who use old rusted pins to cut because they don't have instruments on the field of war, they sew you up with needles which have gone to rust a thousand years ago, and save one life in a million. Because you are busy shooting everybody on both sides, and the poor doctor without instruments — how can he save a life?

So, we are being stupid like that, in trying to be soft, gentle, kind. What for? Beware of a man who tries to teach you who is kind, who says, "Yes, yes, my dear. It is enough. You only got twenty-two marks in mathematics? Last year you got only eighteen, if I remember right. Four marks more? *Mama mia* — improvement!" "Yes, but teacher, I have failed." "Doesn't matter. Keep going. Next year, perhaps." "Next class or same class?" "Same class. But don't worry, I am there. You are in the same class; I am also in the same class!" [laughter] So, the teacher and the taught go around in circles, age after age, eon after eon, neither making any progress.

So, beware of teachers who are soft and tender. They must love you, but they must not be soft with you. If a doctor is going to weep before operating on you, you should look for a new doctor. Yes, what is a doctor who is going to hold your hands and sympathise and say, "Oh, my dear Mala (or my dear Mukta), how can I possibly operate upon you? You are my heart and my soul. How can I do it?" So, send for another doctor. This is the funny thing, that even the greatest specialist of a doctor cannot operate on his own son, for instance, because at a critical moment he may get frightened. It is easier to talk of Abraham and his son and the sacrifice. Not everyone is an Abraham. Not doctors, certainly.

So, we want surgeons who will not fail us. We must have the courage to say, "Cut me up, but heal me." Have you the capacity for that? Then stand before me and talk. You must demand from your teachers. Why are you going to the priest, putting on a false smile, dressed in your best clothes, pocket full of money to be put on the plate, so he can say, "This is so-and-so, she is very philanthropic." India is full of newspaper advertisements every morning: multimillionaires who have swindled society, swindled the government — dead. Seth Maganlal Viralal Chotulal. "Gone but not forgotten." Philanthropist, no? You take away a crore of rupees from society and give back ten rupees and you become a philanthropist. I am nauseated by these things. And the bigger the crook, the bigger the photograph! [laughter] In India you can see full-page advertisements — big photograph, full-page, repeated for twenty-five days, because every company must advertise, otherwise the top boss will say, "Why has this company not put this paper today?" So, if you own sixty-three companies, you will die like stupid fools, buy a newspaper, and have to see his face every morning staring at us from a full-page advertisement, and read different versions of the same nauseating lies. Is that what you want?

You only get what you ask for — except in Sahaj Marg. Here, you don't want harsh words. You get it. You don't want unkindness. You get it. You don't want a tough guy. You get it. Why? Because it is good for you. Imagine going to learn karate from a soft-hearted man who won't kick you! And if there is a karate man standing there, even from here I am afraid of him, because he will do one of these triple somersaults, and the third time when he comes out, his feet will knock me off. Imagine learning karate from a soft-hearted gentleman, who says, "No, no. We don't really kick here." If you want to be whatever it is — the tenth degree, ninth degree, eighth degree black belt — you have to bear kicks. You might even have to almost lose your life. Otherwise you don't become karate expert.

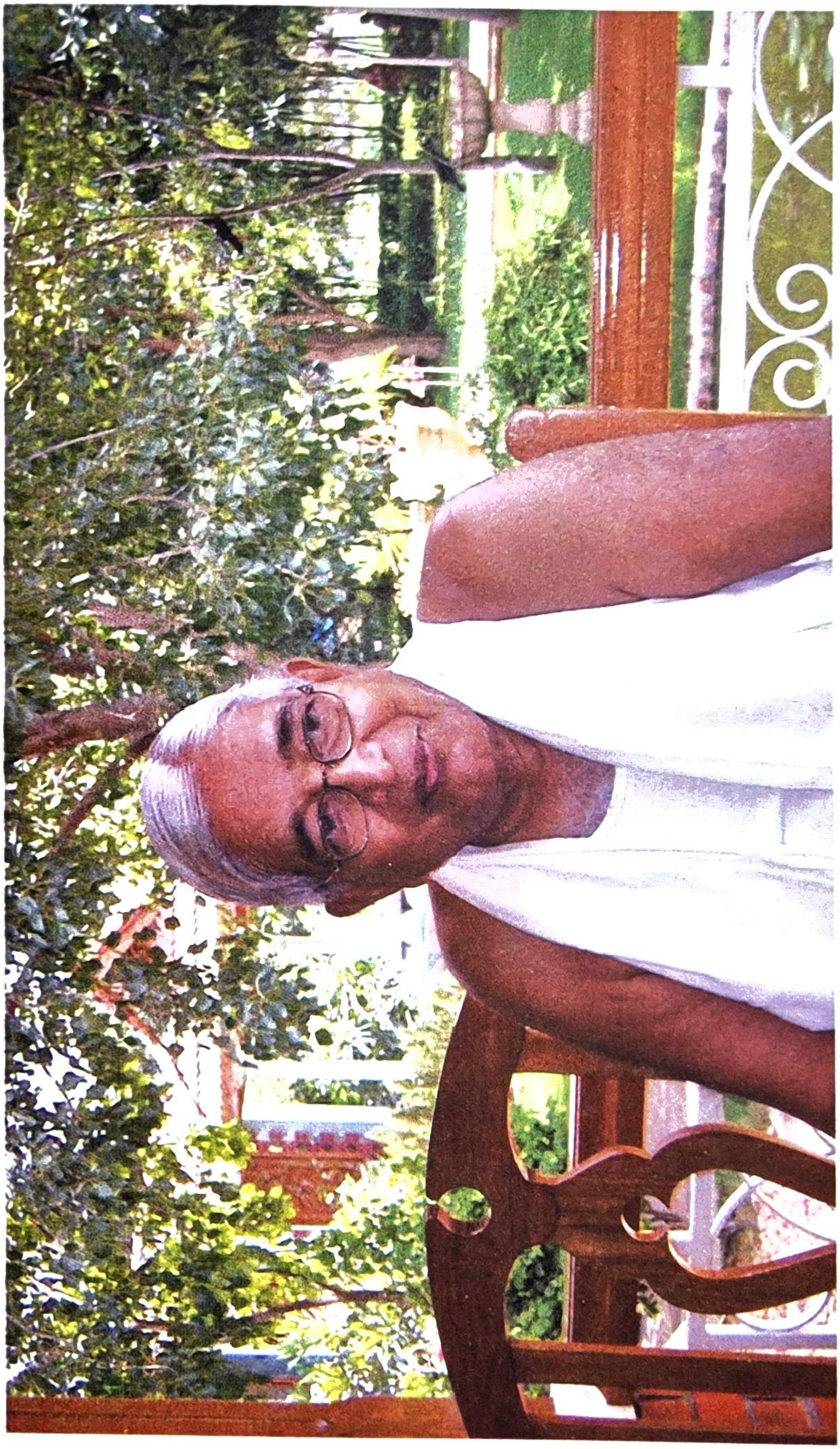
In any discipline, at the top, at the very top, there is this exposure to possible death. Without passing that door of possible death, you don't achieve mastery. Doctors — same story. An inadvertent prick from an unsterilised needle, and you can die. In which field can you do it? In business? Not at all, because unless you are willing to put everything you have at stake, you don't become a billionaire.

So you see, discipline means training yourself for this ultimate possibility of having to die for what you need — what you desperately need. Therefore it is called *pranahuti*. This is not the *ahuti* [offering] of, you know, *kheer* [sweet porridge] into fire, or *payasam* [sweet porridge] into fire, or gold coins into fire, or six yard silk saris costing seventy thousand rupees in the *homa* [sacred fire]. I have seen all of them. Here, you offer your life itself, and to such a one, life becomes eternal.

So you see, Sahaj Marg discipline is a very demanding discipline. Don't expect things through prayer which are not good for you; they shall not be answered, because your Master is not stupid; God is not stupid. We must understand this. When we know that our needs are fulfilled and our wants not, even the **need** for prayer goes. What should I pray for? What I need He gives. What I want is always superfluous. So, to whom and for what should I pray? But, you love your Lord, you love your Master, and like every mother looks after her child, He looks after us.

So, you see, prayer as a discipline we have not understood at all. We can always pray for others, but you never pray that somebody else may be a millionaire — you know the dangers. If somebody is sick, you pray. If somebody is in deep trouble, you pray. It is permitted. Never for yourself.

So, Sahaj Marg must be correctly understood, that the way to God's heart is through prayer for others, not for myself. Then God says, "Here is a selfless person who has started praying for others. His heart is getting softer and softer. He is now prepared to pray for everything, for everybody, but of himself he has no thought. Let me look after him." You start giving generously, selflessly, God says, "Here is one who gives generously and selflessly. Let me



give more and more to him so that he may continue to give." Such a person is like a river; he cannot be depleted. He gives, and he finds he has not given, because what he has is always with him. The Giver gives through him.

So, only through giving, praying for others, even unto the ultimate sacrifice of having to give your life for what you think of as something you love, something you cherish, something you want to last forever. Until that stage is reached, there is no true Sahaj Marg. Otherwise, it is just meditation, prayer, and cleaning, and this and that and the other, you see — ritualistic.

Sahaj Marg can easily become a religion, which would be a tragedy. It is facing a challenge right now, because people say, "Shahjahanpur ashram is the temple of Sahaj Marg." I don't know what Babuji is doing up there; he must be weeping! Shahjahanpur a temple? Then why not Fategarh? His ashes worship-able? A mere piece of marble slab a place of worship? Babuji must be thinking, "What have I done?"

I have seen him weep while he was alive, when he considered the possibilities. I have told you the story of a man, of two people who came to him and said, when the ashram was being built, "Babuji, you should have a statue of Lalaji Maharaj, your Master." He said, "*Bada umdha* suggestion *hai.*" ["Good suggestion."] And, when they had left, he said, "See, *kaise bewakoof hamare paas atey hain!* What fools come to me!" So, somebody said, "Well, Master, don't you think it's a good suggestion? After all, your own Master, you are taking his name every moment." He said, "Yes, but if I put a statue, it will be garlanded. Next, somebody will put *prasad* there, next somebody will bring *karpoor* [camphor], and *ghanti* [small bell]," and in no time at all somebody would build an edifice over it, and it is a temple: Lalaji Maharaj Temple. Spirituality gone, idolatry re-established in the heart of what should be a spiritual empire. Yet one more temple, useless temple, stupid temple, destructive temple — to the hundreds of thousands we already have in India.

So you see, these things are very dangerous. These ideas, that a place is charged, and therefore you don't need the Master any more; you have only to go and sit there. Very dangerous. It is like saying, "There was a lamp here. How can it be dark?" "Yes, but it **is** dark." "You are a heretic! Throw him out." Intolerance. "How can it be dark in Shahjahanpur? I mean, it is blasphemous to say it." And if you have the guts to go and sit there and meditate and tell the truth, that you did not feel anything, they say, "Poor fellow. He needs cleaning." Who is going to do the cleaning? "The man there. Anybody in Shahjahanpur can do it. You know, it is all Babuji's power which is working."

This hypocrisy has crept into our Mission, very sadly, long ago — even in Babuji's lifetime. Even, to my knowledge, from 1967. And of course, before that I do not know, because it has been there.

So you see, where there is good, there is always bad, side by side. Where there is an ashram, I don't know if many of you know it or not, but right there in the heart of our spiritual empire, people started drinking. Other things happened, of which I don't want to mention — in the heart of our spiritual empire.

So you see, it is the **heart** which must be kept pure. It is the heart which fails. It is the heart which breaks. It is the heart which loves. This is the seed of everything that is human, of everything that is Divine. Humanity exists nowhere except here. Divinity exists nowhere but here. For us, we sift it out and say, "Only Divinity shall reside here." Therefore we clean, we remove grossness, we remove what we call the mundane humanity of flesh and blood, desires, lusts, greed, wants, until that purified heart contains nothing but the Divine, which was already there, covered with coverings, as Babuji said: "*Mal, aavaran, vikshep*, [Grossness, coverings, confusion], etc."

So, it is this cleaning which is important. Cleaning with the idea that I cannot hold on to anything when it is beginning, because there are people who don't come for cleaning, saying, "No, no. You will clean **everything** out! I want to keep some of it. Otherwise, what is the joy of life?" I said, "No, no, you see, I don't know what I am cleaning, really. It is like putting a vacuum cleaner on your carpet." And he said, "Precisely! That's what I don't want. You know, I've just started an affair. It's going well, and I don't want you to clean that out. So Chari, I'll come back when I'm finished with that!" [laughter]

This is a real-life story, too. People have asked me for selective cleaning, where they can be allowed to retain what they want, and the rest can go. That's not possible. This is not like a shower where you put on a shower cap and keep your hair dry and wet the rest of your body, and come out with body aromatic, hair stinky. This is not like that. I wonder who invented this shower cap business!

So you see, people are afraid to be clean. They want to be dirty, they want to be unclean, they want desires, they want lusts. Why? Because we have associated a good life with pleasure. So, really, when we sit for cleaning, we are in one way closing our hearts to the power of the Master which is going to clean us. And Babuji says, "What is this? The power is being reflected back." You see how strong we are in our resistance, that even the Master cannot penetrate into your heart until you permit it. The heart is the softest, yet the hardest. Without your permission, the Master cannot enter. If he cannot enter, he cannot clean. If he cannot clean, you will grow harder and harder in your hearts.

So, everything depends upon you. Your spiritual life depends upon you. Your progress depends upon you. Your divinisation depends upon you. Then, what depends on the Master? Nothing. He is your servant. The maid is at the door, she rings the bell; you say, "Come back tomorrow. After all, vacuum cleaning can be done tomorrow, too. Why today? Today I am busy. My brother is in bed. He doesn't want to be disturbed. We will make the bed tomorrow. We will clean the house tomorrow." What will the servant maid do? She is happy. She says, "Okay, I still get paid for it." But here, the tragedy is, your servant is not even paid for what he does for you.

Free service, and nobody wants it. Therefore, Babuji said, "My house has no doors." And, precisely because it has no doors, we think there could be nothing in it. I mean, which fool would have valuable things in his house and keep the doors open?

So, the very fact of having open doors in the house creates suspiciousness, that this man who claims so much cannot have really anything valuable. "Open doors and something valuable inside? Who is he trying to fool?" Let us find locked doors, because there we may find something. And when you do find locked doors, you break it open and you break another heart, and inside you find nothing.

So, this is the tragedy of open doors and closed doors. You break open a locked door, which doesn't want you to enter, and you find it was all dust and ashes, nothing really there. You find an open door, where you are welcome day or night, year-in and year-out, where there is the wealth of this universe, in nothingness, and you say, "Nothing. What will I do with nothing?" Nothing comes from nothing, you know, nothing ever could — a beautiful song. But it is from nothing that everything has come.

The story of the seed, which is from the Upanishads, where the guru tells the disciple who wants to know, "What is it that you call God?" "Huge tree — bring a fruit. Cut it open." "Yes." "What do you see inside?" "Pulp." "What else?" "Tiny seeds." "Cut a seed. What do you find?" "Nothing." He says, "From this nothing that huge tree has come."

So you see, from nothing everything can come, but from something, only that something can come which it is. So, from a fool you will get foolishness, from a beggar you will get half a paisa, if he is willing to share it, from a thief you will get knowledge of how to rob. It was two and a half centuries ago, you know, when this school was running in London, England — a school for pickpockets. Some of you might have read about it.

So, this is as old as the world. The oldest profession, they say, is prostitution, but I think it is hypocrisy. Because, we had in our temples in India, *devadasis* — divinised prostitutes. What a term! How can it be? Because the Lord was supposed to be using them. And who was the Lord who was using them? The priest! In French they have this philosophy of what we call the '*droit du seigneur*': the chief of the village or the noble or the count, took care of the job of de-floweration, as they called it politely. Every virgin girl had to go to him before she married. It was his right — '*droit*' means 'right' — 'droit du seigneur'. And, because we want this right, we transfer it to God, and say even God has this right. He is the first deflowerator. So, we have devadasis. Therefore, the cult of the devadasi becomes in some way divine. Therefore, girls are trained from childhood to be devadasis. You see what a shambles our society has become? And, if you stopped going to temples, the priests would have nothing to do, there would be no devadasis, the temple would close, and humanity would be benefited.

The same applies to churches, synagogues — everything. If Christ was against the temples of the Jews, the synagogues, and overturned the moneychangers' tables and set free the doves meant for sacrifice, two thousand years ago — the story has not changed. We are still playing the same cracked gramophone record. "Amen, amen, amen...," it goes on, "*Turang*, *turang*, amen, amen..." — a cracked record, no change in the music. And we don't know what 'amen' means, and we don't know what we are saying 'amen' to. The priest is praying in Latin or in Sanskrit or in Hebrew, and we say 'amen' without knowing what we are saying 'amen' to. For all you know, he may be saying in Hebrew, "May all this congregation go to hell!" "Amen!" [laughter]

So you see, we need understanding, not knowledge, but understanding of what we are doing. To understand, we must seek it through the heart, not through the head. The head gives knowledge, the heart gives understanding. Babuji said, "Refer to the heart," not without reason, because the heart is the instrument of understanding. You want to understand a person? Look at him with your heart. If you look at him with your eyes and your head, you will get a computerised report. Look at that man, that karate expert, looking fierce. As somebody said, who was that, Van Damme, the actor? Jean-Claude Van Damme, and you are afraid. But look at his heart. Behind that craggy exterior and that bodyguard figure and that karate expertise, what hides behind all that rough shirt is a beating heart, you know, which wants love. He probably learned karate because his girlfriend likes karate. She says, "Why don't you pick up tenth degree, or seventeenth degree?" I like karate, too, but I am not able to practice. I am too old, thank heavens, because I might have broken a leg or my head.

So, understanding, don't look at the face with your eyes. You have been to Babuji Maharaj, at least some of you. Did he ever look at your face? You came and he looked at your heart — looked up, looked back, and it was finished. He had not only x-rayed you, he had Xeroxed you for his files, he had copied you for distribution, and he had sent one copy to his Master, too! [laughter] One look like this, one look there, second look for confirmation, and it was finished. That is why he never recognised anybody. He did not know the names of anybody. But when you sat before him and meditated, he could tell you exactly what he did for you eleven years back in a particular sitting. We can do everything else. "Oh, didn't we meet at the Hilton in Cairo? John Barlow, isn't it?" "Yes, what a wonderful memory you have!" And we are proud. But he didn't know an Englishman from a Negro. He didn't know a man from a woman. But, **he knew hearts**. Looked once at your chest, once up, once back, finished. You are compiled now in his dictionary of events, of the past, the present, and the future — forever.

This is the vision that we have to develop. This is how we understand the human being. This is how we become capable of generosity and love, because we say, "Look at this heart." But we never look at the heart. We look at the pocket, we look at the face. And, I am tempted to add that famous song, "*Choli ke peechhey kya hai.*" ["What is behind the blouse?"] [laughter] I haven't heard it, but I've seen about it in some magazines. Now, when you say, "*Choli ke peechhey kya hai,*" people have different imaginations. Somebody thinks of something; somebody thinks of something else, and that something else is what I read in the newspapers the day before yesterday, about a woman who enlarged her breasts with something injected into it, and therefore she claimed depreciation on that expense. It was an asset, you see. A natural breast is natural; it is not an asset. But, when it becomes enlarged by whatever it is that you do, it is now converted into a business asset. Therefore, depreciate it. And the law allowed it in America, or wherever it was. I keep up with the news! [laughter] Because, for me, it comes in handy in my talks! So you see, this is the heart now we are looking at — not that which is beating inside, but which pretends to beat outside.

Spirituality is based on understanding. Understanding is absolutely essential for human beings to interact with each other rationally, normally, affectionately. If you understand, you will not exploit. If a businessman comes to you, desperately trying to sell you something, and you want to make a killing, as they call it here in South Africa, if you look at his heart you won't do it. You will say, "All right, you want a hundred thousand for this; take one hundred twenty thousand. You need it. I have enough to give you." Otherwise, you will say, "Eighty thousand," and kill the blighter, and add one more business murder to your account. This is how killings are made, and it is quite correctly and aptly named 'killing'. In America, they say that unless you have the killer instinct, you cannot succeed. So, success depends upon killing.

Here, we give life — *pranahuti*. And we give doses as necessary — as Babuji said again and again — correct dosage. And to know the dosage, you must know the patient. What is the organ that is here involved? The heart. Therefore, unless you can look in, unless you can diagnose expertly, you cannot fix the dosage, therefore preceptors are just transmitting wildly, you see, and we get random results, thanks to His grace, His mercy.

So, we have to cultivate all these essential attributes, and without love you cannot understand, because it is love which makes you understand your child, it is love which makes you understand your husband. That is why women have more understanding than men, because men look at faces, women look at hearts. Or, at least used to — I hope they still have that ability. Therefore, women are very necessary in our lives, not as objects of admiration or pleasure, but as something which can teach us how to understand as they understand — how to use intuition that they are naturally gifted with, how to be capable of sacrifice as they are able to sacrifice. Therefore, *grihastha* ashram is essential in Sahaj Marg.

One final thing I would like to say, that in the Hindu tradition, the children emancipate the parents. So, let us not look down upon our children and say they are stupid, they are foolish, they are teenagers; what can they do? They can shake this world. Let us permit it, because as you know, when you shake a bag, you can put more into it! This world needs shaking up. We need courageous, we need enlightened, and most of all, we need teenagers with idealistic outlook on life. We of the elder generation are already too corrupt to be changed. We are the objects of the Master's mercy. They will be the objects of Master's love.

Thank you.

HE WANTS YOU TOTALLY

Lenasia, Johannesburg, South Africa

17 April, 1994

I am at a loss for words, because I remember the story of Moses, when he went up the mountain and he heard the voice of God saying, "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground." Moses was shocked and frightened. He took off his shoes, went on his knees, and covered his face in terror — terror of God. It is an old story from, I think, the Old Testament. Today we also stand on holy ground on a holy day. But we have a benevolent and loving and kind Master, of whom we need not be afraid, who does not ask us to bend our knees, but who blesses us and says, "Be happy, but in your spiritual life." He does not deny us material happiness or wealth or health, but his advice always was, "Minimum comfort, maximum spiritual existence."

In our ashrams in India you will find only minimum comfort. To those who have been Westernised, I mean even Indians, it often appears as if they are crude. Now, we should not confuse crude with simple. So, our effort here should also be to obey Master's dictum of minimum comfort, because where there is too much comfort we cannot meditate. I have seen in many countries where too much comfort is provided. Half the time the abhyasi spends in adjusting the six or seven cushions upon which he is sitting, but where there are no cushions we seem to accept the pain and instantly go off into deep meditation. Luxury is, in many senses, a hindrance to the spiritual life.

You all remember that old saying, "Even a camel may pass through the eye of a needle, but rarely shall a rich man enter the doors of Heaven." It is not a criticism of the rich, or of richness. It is a criticism of our **attachment** to our riches. There is no harm in being rich, there is no harm in making money. But how it is spent... Whether it is spent just by counting our commitment, or whether, like a river, we allow it to flow without measure. That decides for us whether the riches will help us or hinder us.

I think I have told you a story earlier about Heaven and its gate and gatekeeper. There was a huge queue waiting to get in, and the gatekeeper was letting them in one by one. Suddenly there was a flurry of activity. Somebody came, the gates were opened, telephones clanged, a car came, red carpet was rolled out, and this man who had just come was put into the car and taken to the Divine presence. One man like me was upset. He said, "I have been waiting here for a week to gain entry, and here comes this blighter who is taken away in a car with a red carpet rolled out." He was quite annoyed. He said, "Favouritism here, too. Nepotism here, too." Eventually, when he managed to reach the Divine presence, he said, "Lord, I have a question to ask" — very much like Mac here. The Lord smiled and said, "Yes, why not? Go ahead." He said, "I am surprised to find that even in your own kingdom, in this Heaven of yours there is favouritism and nepotism." God denied it. He said, "Not possible." He said, "Yes, but ten days ago, when I was still standing outside in a big queue, one fellow came and the gates were opened wide, your personal car came, took him, red carpet was rolled out, bugles playing. Is it not nepotism and favouritism?" God said, "You know, he was one of the richest men on earth. For him to turn to God, it was really something which is almost impossible. People like you come in the millions every day. People like him come once in a century or once in ten centuries. Don't you think he deserves a special reception?" [laughter] Now, of course we would like to be rich and also have a special reception by God, but be careful because it is very difficult.

So, we should eschew ostentatious living, unnecessary accumulation either of knowledge or of wealth. Everything has its place in life — even the intelligence. Because we find we go on learning and learning and learning. What for? If I have to climb up I need a ladder — a serviceable ladder — it can be of bamboo, it can be of rope. But if somebody insists that it must be of gold studded with diamonds, he forgets that when he has climbed up to where he is climbing, the ladder is going to be left behind.

So, everything in our life must be like a ladder which takes us step by step by step without stopping on the way anywhere. That is an intelligent life, that is a life well-lived. Now, when we go to temples, this sort of thing does not happen. There we are only going as beggars trying to beg for more and more from a God who has already bestowed enough upon us, and more than enough upon us.

Often I think if I were God, and people came to the temple where I am in their Mercedes cars, dressed in their best attire, and went on their knees before me praying for more and more, I would probably weep. My children reduced to beggars when they are already millionaires and billionaires? What have I created? I am sure God is weeping all the time. It cannot be otherwise. I can understand people who have nothing, who are on the margin of existence — they weep and beat their breast and ask for something — God also weeps — but at least they have a **need** to ask Him, to beg. There, God weeps because, "These children of mine are neglecting those children of mine, forgetting they too are their brothers and sisters. What is this family that I have created? This human family that I have created, where they have forgotten that they are brothers and sisters, united by a common parentage — I their father — and they have become so selfish, so self-centred. They think of nothing but themselves."

Even a dying man on the street is left to die. In India we say, "The government will take care of it. After all, what can we do? There are so many people who are dying every day." But they forget, they too are going to die one day, and there must be somebody who will take care of them. They must remember that famous dictum, again from the Bible, "Do unto others as you would be done by." It is not that we can do something now, thinking the same thing will happen to me when I need it. But if I help a needy person on the street, someday, somewhere, sometime, I may have help — maybe from an air hostess on a plane, maybe from a ticket vendor, or maybe from **any** source. Because, in the river, when you take water from it, you do not put the water back again into the same river. It is constantly flowing; you are never able to do it. The river always flows towards the sea. We cannot make it go back up to the mountains.

So, He the giver is giving us, and it is flowing as a river. Somebody mentioned Bhageerath — he brought the Ganga down to earth. Wherever the river is flowing through you have a right to take what you need — put back the rest.

So you see, this is the principle that guides Sahaj Marg living. Existence is something else. Don't confuse existence with living. I live because I exist. Living is this life which I am leading here, from birth to death, from gynaecologist to the mortician. That is life — living. Existence is the internal existence of what is inside me, that which exists forever, unborn, uncreated, undying — my soul. People often confuse living with existence. My existence is eternal; that existence is surely divine, because it is an *amsha* of the Deity, of God Himself. But living here is something we have to live ourselves, using our mind and our heart. We often use the mind. Nowadays, we **mostly** use the mind. Heart? No.

It is a common experience — you see a beggar on the street in India. At a distance you feel pity for him. You put your hand into your pocket thinking you will give him ten rupees. You come nearer and you say five rupees is enough. As you come to him, you pull out a coin and put it in his box. In the ten yards that you are walking towards the beggar, the heart has failed, the mind has taken over, and the ten rupees has become ten paise.

But when we walk towards our future, and all that we deserve is ten paise, and we hope for ten rupees, and God gives us ten million, are we reciprocating that generosity, that heartfullness of God, His immense kindness and love for us, in behaving in **exactly** the opposite way towards our brothers and sisters?

I have been talking yesterday and day before yesterday about gambling. Let me assure all of you, I am perhaps the deepest gambler here today, precisely because I put myself on the table. Now, how can I afford to do that? Because, unlike you, who have only limited resources, however big they may be, my resource is perennial and eternal. Every time I put myself at stake and say, "Come on, throw your damn dice," He comes to me again and says, "Yes, go on throwing. Sometime, somewhere you will find somebody who will succumb to this and come to you." The rest is not wasted because the stakes you take here, they are not even taking when they win! You are putting yourself at stake but the fools who are gambling against you do not know what you have put there — life itself, perennial life, eternal life. It goes back to its source.

So, when I gamble, **I** lose nothing. Nor does He lose anything, because it is only a cyclical process going on and on, and if once in a century I lose or the Master loses like that, he is happy, he says, "Today I have found someone who has really recognised the value of the stake I have put here on this roulette table or the card table, or what have you." When such a man comes it is a pleasure to lose. At other times we lose nothing because the taker has not taken anything. This is not like Dharmaputra, gambling with Shakuni — first his arms, then his crown, then his robes, then his... what is all this nonsense? They are things that any fool can recognise and take away. Put even your own wife as the stake, which is what Dharmaputra did.

So you see, here there are no recognisable stakes. There is no tangible stake. This is nothing which is palpable. If you have the vision to see what is **really** at stake, you should have to put yourself as your stake, and then you will see the miracle, that this man is always losing, willing to lose, happy to lose, immensely overjoyed to lose, because he has the capacity to give himself again and again to you. But his misery has always been — nothing — everybody is here but nobody takes. "They don't even see me!" Babuji said, "Many come to see me but nobody sees me." That was his sorrow, that "I am here, not giving them power or knowledge or wealth, but **myself**." But they don't want it because they see an old man with a beard, with a walking stick, who has to be helped to go to the toilet, who has to be handed a towel and a mug of water to wash. They say, "Him? Or, should I go for the diamonds and the Mercedes cars and the gold in South Africa." The choice is obvious. Quoting again from the Bible, "Throw not pearls before swine." That was a statement made by a man who could not afford to gamble, who would not be willing to lose his pearls, but wanted to keep them. My Master said, "Throw pearls before swine, so that some day at least one swine will recognise this, and then my life's aim will be fulfilled."

So, like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, you know, he was waiting for Narendra. Narendra was, like Mac again, intellectual, intelligent, arrogant, and when he saw Ramakrishna for the first time, it is recorded in their books, he said, "What is this feeble old fellow weeping with emotion?" He was embarrassed when Ramakrishna embraced him and wept, and treated him like a baby, wanted to feed him by putting food into his mouth. Narendra was deeply embarrassed. "Saint? This guy?" Again, looking with these eyes, thinking with this instrument of thought, had Ramakrishna let him go, he would have been another barrister or a lawyer who died as Narendra Nath Ghosh, but fortunately for him, Ramakrishna did not let him go. When he did not come, Ramakrishna went to him, and he said, "Where are you?" Again, Narendra was embarrassed. "Why is this fellow not leaving me alone, for heaven's sake? Dancing, singing like a madman. What will people think of me?" is what

Narendra used to think. Of course, finally the arrogant young bull was tamed into the soft gentle child of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Then he became Vivekananda. *Viveka* means what? What does *viveka* mean? Discrimination.

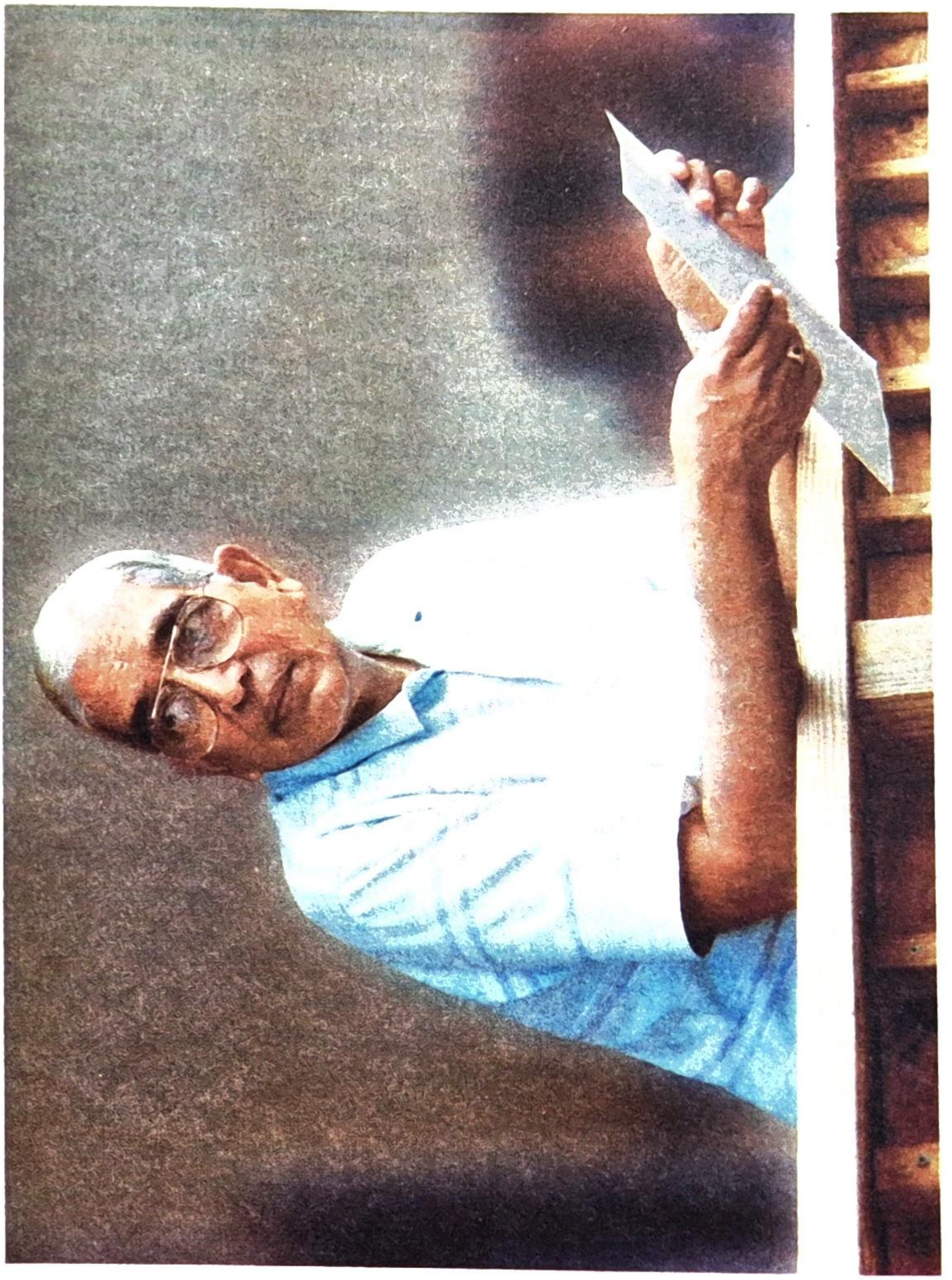
We have to develop this quality of discrimination in ourselves — not thinking, not intelligence. Many of you pride yourselves that you can say what a cloth is by even feeling it in the dark. "This is silk, this is taffeta, this is cotton, this is linen." Wonderful — sensitivity at your fingertips. Many of you are proud that you can recognise real gold from plated ornaments. Wonderful. Many of you are proud that you know a pure pearl from a synthetic pearl. Wonderful, but have you developed the discrimination to see a pure heart against an impure heart? A loving heart against a hating heart? Against a heart that is beating for you, and a heart which is beating for itself. Have you developed this discrimination? Vivekananda did, because even though he was rebellious, even though he was proud and arrogant, yet he managed to subjugate himself to this mad old man of the Kali temple, and he became a world famous figure. Today, Vivekananda is known all over the world. Ramakrishna is not so well known. It is Vivekananda who is well known, because in making himself, he was able to expose the Master to the gaze of this world and say, "I am what **He** made me."

My Master was also hoping for such persons, because he is the humble carpenter, the humble potter, the humble stonemaker, carver, goldsmith, everything, sitting at home and turning out artifacts. But these artifacts must go out, and somebody say, "Who made this?" "Oh, there is an old fellow who sits in a corner there, you know." "He made this lovely thing? Please take me to him."

So, upon you rests his reputation — not his existence, not his position in the Father's kingdom, but his worldly reputation is in the care of each one of you here. Remember that, by everything that you do and say, his name is going to be involved. Just by repeating, "Babuji Maharaj, Babuji Maharaj, Babuji Maharaj," like a parrot, is no use. I can train a parrot in three days to say, "Babuji Maharaj." Don't take his name in vain. "Take not the name of thy Lord thy God in vain." Don't use Babuji, saying, "There is water in the toilet today. Thank heaven's, Babuji's grace!" Don't say, "By Babuji's grace I got a ticket." These are useless, silly things of this world which every one of you has the capacity to deal with and acquire and achieve. Use Babuji's name only in such circumstances where holiness is pervading, where what you speak pertains to that which is holy, that which is spiritual, where you are speaking of the other world, the brighter world, and not of this world.

I cannot instruct you. I cannot order you, because every one of you thinks he is a *bhakta*. I am not a bhakta, but I have enough sense to know what my Master wants. I have enough strength to do what he wants me to do. And he gives me the courage to speak what must be spoken to you all. Bhakti is not in *bhajans* or in repetition of names — not even of Babuji Maharaj. Bhakti is an attitude in your heart. Not for nothing did Krishna say in the Gita, when Arjuna asks him, "Who are most dear to you?", he said, "*Bhaktaas te ativa me priyaah.*" "The bhaktas are the most dear to me." A bhakta is one who worships and is devoted and has *shraddha* [devotion] — all combined in one person.

Love, faith, belief — all combined with a worshipful attitude towards the Master — produces a bhakta. Such a person will not, like the Hindu bride of past years, take a husband's name. No Indian woman would take her husband's name in India. Today it has become fashionable, unfortunately. I call it a fall in our moral values, in our standards, in our social etiquette. Sita would not say, "Ram, come here." Even today, most of our women in India will say, "My child's father is not at home." But here we have become shameless. Why? Because that which is sacred cannot be profaned by public exhibition, by public speech, by public display. We criticise cultures where



men and women hug and kiss in the open, and we say, "Shameless!" But it is only a question of degree. When an Indian woman takes her husband's name she is equally shameless, perhaps in a smaller degree, lesser degree — nevertheless shameless.

So you see, shame and shamefulness and shamelessness are all relative values. If you cannot, according to an ancient culture, take the name of your husband, how can you take the name of your Master in vain? Please be warned, please be advised that it is not appropriate. It is not at all appropriate to talk of him, whom you should be worshipping, in public. Not for nothing is the Lord said to be the Nameless One in a few religions. He cannot be named; then how are you going to address Him? Paradox? Bewilderment? No, because Babuji said, "The language of God is silence." Sit and meditate. Seek to intercommunicate with Him through the heart.

Mac has a beeper, but its range is only seventy kilometres. Yes, but this beeper of mine has infinite range. Nor does it beep so that everybody knows. Nor does it reveal the number of the one who is calling; it is not necessary because it is only connected to one source, and when it beeps I know who is calling, and I sit down, close my eyes, and if I am fortunate and in the right state at that moment, the right spiritual state, I receive the message.

So you see, public exhibition of bhakti only shows an inner lack of bhakti. Publicly voicing Babuji's name and pretending to be his great bhakta is self-revelatory of the fact that you know nothing but his name. Talking of the few things that he did for you here — going somewhere to eat, giving sittings somewhere, when he was almost tottering into the grave — is again insulting to him. Because, for a man who could have given you the universe, for you to be satisfied with a sitting or a *dhokla* that he ate from your hands, he thinks, "What is this? What have I come to give, and in exchange for it, what they should give are they giving me? Is a *dhokla* enough for me? Is the *dahi* [curd] enough for me? Is gold enough for me? What I need is their heart, but that they are keeping inside, carefully locked up in their *tijori* [safe] with their gold."

He who gives his heart does not speak about it. Especially in Indian philosophy, we say, "He who knows cannot speak; he who speaks does not know." This is a great truth. So, when we talk of the kindness that we have received, even from Babuji Maharaj, we do not know what we have to get from him. We are still ignorant, we are still in darkness, and all that we expect from him are the goody-goodys, like children expect chocolates.

So, for your sake, please learn what Sahaj Marg is all about. Please learn what it has to do for you. Please learn what you have to surrender to your Master. The other day I said, if you give even your own body to the Master, but not with the heart in it, whether male or female, it is still prostitution. If you give a donation without your heart in it, it is a bribe. If you give food without your heart behind it, you are treating him whom you are feeding as a beggar. My Master is neither a beggar, nor does he like prostitution, nor does he want gifts. He wants you **totally.**

This Mission is for people who can surrender themselves: heart, soul, body — everything. There is no use saying, "Master, I have surrendered to you, but this house is mine, this car is mine." Everything is his. But it should not be, you know, a formality to say, "*Yeh to aap ki hi gaadi hai.*" ["Oh, it is your car."] I have heard so many people talking about their cars belonging to Babuji. Babuji sits; they hope he will bless them by sitting in it. And yet they have the cheek, the temerity, the stupidity to imagine that Babuji is fooled! "*Yeh to aap ki hi gaadi hai, Babuji Maharaj.*"

So, Babuji used to smile... hum, hum... like that, you know. I said, "Babuji, (*peechey se* [from behind], I used to say) why are you smiling?" He says, "No, no. Poor man, he is fooling himself by what he is saying. I cannot be fooled." That was what he said. People invited him for food and they were calculating what it would cost that evening. Eventually he would turn up, pretend to have stomach ache and not eat, and go away. I have seen this repeated a hundred and a hundred and a hundred times over and over again. I have gone with him to places where he would not eat. With his most enchanting smile and with his grimace of pain, you know, "Ahhh...," he would get up. "Babuji Maharaj, what is wrong? *Peda* [sweet] *hai, yeh hai vo hai* [pointing to different foods]?" "My stomach. *Aaithan* [cramps]," he used to call it, you see. And in five minutes we were in the car.

Once, he was invited, when he was staying with me in Madras, and the man came to take him but this man [Babuji] was unwilling to go — my man, my man in Heaven, we call it. I said, "Babuji, you have to go. Otherwise they will blame me. If you stay here they will think I have stopped you." He said, "Doesn't matter what they think. I don't want to go." I said, "Why?" He said, "It is not etiquette to invite me when I am staying in your house without inviting you, too." He put on his cap and three times took it off; fourth time suddenly he said, "Lalaji says, 'Go'." So he went. The car was there; he went. We all sat down and ate in our kitchen. Some five minutes later we heard the gate, and somebody rushed out, and it was Babuji, and he came and stood in the kitchen like this. He said, "*Bahu, humara khaana kahan hai?* Where is my food?" He sat down with us and ate. So I said, "Babuji, today you are fit enough to have two dinners!" He said, "No, no. Only one." I said, "What about that?" He said, "I didn't eat. They called me. I went. And came back."

So you see, without the heart all is empty nonsense, empty rubbish. And remember, empty vessels make the most noise. A piece of wisdom from the past: empty vessels make the most noise. Like in your temple you have this *bhajan* going on every morning — empty vessels making the most noise. We don't want empty vessels. We want full vessels, and you know when you put a bucket under the tap, first it makes a great deal of noise with the water falling, but as it gets fuller and fuller, the noise is less and less; finally it stops.

That is what I want to see here: silence, reflecting on your inner condition, where nothing is to be said, nothing needs to be spoken, no names need to be mentioned. Not even the Master's, because the Master has really no name, no form — nothing. Otherwise, we are all telling lies to each other, recounting the past, remembering the past, idol worship all over again, with the present reality forgotten. "It was like that. He did this. He said that." Then we have become a religion, and as I said the other day, it is better not to build an ashram but a temple — put Lalaji's statue on the right, and on its left Babuji's, because the disciple is always on the left of the Master — and worship.

Here, there is no worship; there is only meditation. Worship is ritualistic. Worship needs prayers. Worship needs mouthing of phrases which we don't understand. Worship means magnifying those noises until, as Babuji said, the very heavens are spoiled. You have read *Reality at Dawn* and what Babuji has said about bhajans and *keertans* [devotional songs] broadcast over the air, as if God is deaf!

So, every opportunity contains within itself two possibilities — rise and fall. Remember, when you climb the ladder, at any step you can slip and fall. A moment of carelessness, a moment of inattention; you cannot blame the ladder. So, an ashram by itself will guarantee nothing to you. It is only a place — another place. Today Khushal Bhai's place, tomorrow Hyde Point, some time here, another place. Toilets are toilets. Clean or dirty, they are toilets. Kitchens are kitchens. This would be another place where we come and *gappa maaro* [chat] and pretend to meditate and get up and go away, praising Babuji's greatness, because we have no inner greatness to look for.

The wealth of Babuji Maharaj is not outside. As Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and the

Christians make the mistake of thinking heaven is somewhere far away. My Master, too, says, "My kingdom is not of this world. It is **inside** you." He is adding to what Christ taught, amplifying what Christ taught, clarifying what Christ taught, in a sense, though it has nothing to do with Christ or Christianity.

Our kingdom is inside us. It is an infinite kingdom. It can hold infinite treasures within it. It can hold the Master of those treasures Himself within it. The purpose of our meditation should be not to accumulate treasures here, too, but to bring the Master, because when the Master comes, everything comes with Him.

Thank you.

III

Europe

April, 1994

WHAT IS SAHAJ MARG?

Vienna, Austria

24 April, 1994

(Shri P. Rajagopalachari in a radio interview by Diane Shooman)

Q: Could you please tell me, what is Sahaj Marg?

PR: Sahaj Marg is a way of life in which we try to incorporate the spiritual and material lives together, giving each one equal attention.

Q: What is the Sahaj Marg system of meditation?

PR: Meditation means to think about something continuously, constantly. It is nothing esoteric. We are always thinking of things constantly. When people are in love, the boy who is in love is thinking of his girlfriend all the time. He is meditating on her, in a sense. People who want to be successful are meditating on success all the time. And the old law says, what you meditate upon you will become — become in the German sense of getting, and become in the English sense of becoming something, too.

So, Sahaj Marg is trying to bring about a new way of life, where we have lost neither the material half nor the spiritual half. Even in India, we have made the mistake of renouncing the material life and only doing the spiritual part of it, so India is materially a poor country. In the Western world mostly, spirituality has been thrown away, and the material life exists in very good perfection — good science, good technology, good standards of living, good transportation, good communication — but the inner communication is lost. So, Sahaj Marg is trying to bring, I can say, a marriage between the material life and the spiritual life, so that there is now a unitarian existence in which we are balanced in both.

Q: How does this meditation bring this marriage about?

PR: The meditation by itself doesn't bring it about. The meditation gives us the ability to think of one thing constantly, which means we are able to concentrate. So, the mind becomes a perfect instrument which can concentrate on any object upon which it is put. This is how great seers are developed. They don't study, they don't educate themselves. But the mind is trained to concentrate, and concentration is the instrument of revelation.

Q: What is the object of concentration?

PR: The object of concentration is precisely to have what you look at revealed to you in all its essence. So, by itself, it is not spiritual. Meditation by itself is only this. Then we have the second aspect, which is cleaning away the past ignorance and, you know, all that we have accumulated by wrong thoughts, or even right thoughts, because they form what we call a barrier of superstition, of even perhaps knowledge itself. If you read the history of scientific discoveries, often you find people have stopped at a particular spot and said, "Beyond this, nothing can be known." Einstein did it! He said, "Now, science is finished. There is nothing more to be discovered" — the great Albert Einstein himself!

So you see, knowledge itself becomes a barrier. "I know everything. There is nothing more to be known." But we believe knowledge is infinite. It goes on and on and on and on, like the sky goes on and on and on and on. Can you ever say, "I have reached the limit of the sky"? It is not possible. So, the mind has this function. The cleaning removes these barriers which we create for ourselves, by thinking, "I know everything. I am everything. I have done everything. Nothing more is to be done."

Now comes the third part, which is the most important, that by these two processes we begin to have, first belief, then trust, then faith in the one who is guiding us whom you call the Master. And then we are able to give over to him the responsibility for our progress, because he has already taught us so much which we would never have learned. So now, we trust him absolutely. This is called surrender.

So, these three things are necessary together in Sahaj Marg.

Q: These three things, once again?

PR: Meditation, cleaning, remembrance of the Master, which produces love. Because my Master said, "What we love, we remember." And it can be reversed in such a way that what we remember, we learn to love, also.

Q: You said that meditation is concentration on one thought. In Sahaj Marg, what is that one thought?

PR: No, not concentration on one thought. Meditation is learning to retain one thought in the mind, which is concentration. In our meditation, we use the thought that there is divine light filling the heart and illuminating it from inside. It is an abstract thing, because again, if you read the old esoteric philosophies, if you meditate on gross matter, the result is gross. So, meditation must be on as subtle a thing as possible, and in Sahaj Marg my Master says, "Light is the subtlest, even though it is still material." It cannot be weighed, it cannot be tasted, touched, felt, but it is there. So, it is the subtlest form of material existence. At the same time, light illuminates, so when we think of light illuminating our heart inside, in a certain sense, spiritually speaking, we develop the ability to see that which cannot be seen.

Q: How is the method practised?

PR: We just sit comfortably, close our eyes — comfortably, because the body should not disturb us during the course of meditation, which is one hour long — and then continue to hold this thought that there is divine light in the heart, illuminating it from inside. And if the mind wanders from this thought, gently bring it back — not to fight with it, because if you fight, it fights you back. Action and reaction are equal and opposite.

Q: How is the cleaning carried out?

PR: The cleaning is by suggestion. We sit as if we are meditating, imagine the grace of the Master flowing through you and washing out everything from behind, the day's, what shall I say, whatever is there — good, bad, indifferent — because everything becomes the seed for the future, so we remove it, day by day. The past, what has been accumulated and solidified in what we call samskaras, the preceptors of the Mission, or the Guru, he does it himself.

Q: Master, could you please tell us from what tradition has Sahaj Marg come?

PR: Sahaj Marg comes originally from the system of yoga called *raja yoga*. Raja yoga deals only with the mind. You see, there was a *rishi* called Patanjali who lived about five thousand years ago, who codified all the existing systems of yoga and made it one system which he called *ashtanga yoga*, or the yoga of the eight paths or eight aspects. Unfortunately, people have come to misunderstand that all eight are necessary in raja yoga. Raja yoga means the king among yogas, and it deals only with the mind. *Hatha yoga* is a lower part of it, which is dealing with the physical and the psychic systems. For instance, is hatha yoga necessary? My Master said, "Yes, but not for spirituality." Because, in the old days, *rishis* used to meditate twenty-four hours at a time. They had no time to jog, they had no time to walk or swim or do anything, but by changing the position according to a certain formula, of what you call *asanas* today, the psychic, the circulatory systems were kept in perfect order, so that without exercising, they had exercise while they were meditating.

Q: Could you also tell me, can Sahaj Marg be integrated into Western life? I mean, in practical, everyday life.

PR: We are doing it. You are seeing the evidence here, right in Austria. It is a small beginning. And also, you know, we believe that human beings are the same everywhere. As we say in India, "You prick a man, the blood is red!" Whether he is Western or Eastern, Chinese or Indian, doesn't matter. West and east are only directions. You see, if I go to Japan, even India is west! Isn't it? So these are relative things; they have no meaning, really. All these things are for our understanding, because human beings need to communicate, need to travel. So you say Greenwich Mean Time, because the British were powerful in those days, so they said Greenwich Mean Time, zero degrees longitude, and you could [measure] hours and time and longitude from that place. East is east longitude, west is west longitude. Now, suppose Berlin had been the capital of the world. The zero longitude could perhaps have passed through Berlin. So, this is a question of who is in power and what he does! And it is arbitrary.

Q: But why would someone raised in the Judeo-Christian tradition turn to or seek this meditation?

PR: Precisely because people who are raised in the Judeo-Christian religion have not found what they seek in that religion. People raised in the Hindu religion have not found what they seek in that religion. People even in other religions, like Buddhism, have not found what they seek through religion. So, we have come to this common understanding that we have to go beyond religion, whichever religion it may be. Therefore my Master says, "Where religion ends, spirituality begins." Because spirituality is no more religion, though it is from religion that it grows. Like you find that in Christianity you have the saints, who could not be said to be Christians any more. You have in Islam the Sufis, who are no more Muslims, though they say they are Muslims, because otherwise they would be persecuted. In India we have the rishis, who are no more Hindus, but they were rishis. They **transcend** religion and become yogis or meditators, or whatever you call them. Therefore, where religion ends only spirituality can begin. So, it is not a criticism of any religion, but all religions are like the roots which bring into the one trunk of the tree, which is spiritual.

Q: What does spirituality offer that religion cannot offer?

PR: Religion, in general, puts God somewhere out in a Heaven where we don't know where it is, which we say is extremely difficult to reach. Spirituality puts God right inside yourself, basing this truth on the fact that God is all-pervasive, omni-pervasive. He must be everywhere, **in** everything — not outside. The Judeo-Christian religions believe that it is like as if, you know, a boy makes a clay doll — so God created the world or the universe, and He said, "Let there be light." They are putting God **outside** of our existence. Spirituality puts it inside you. So, we have a God who is now within me, who is part of me, who is in fact, my Self — not myself — my Self.

Q: Self, with a big 'S'.

PR: Yes. And so He guides me now from inside. Meditation is the way of, in a sense, establishing contact with Him, seeking His guidance and you know, like when you light a candle, the light goes out from the wick. Similarly, divinity must go out from the heart. So, there is no journey here involved. I don't have to go to Jerusalem or to Mecca or to Benares. Sitting where I am, I can do it.

Q: What do people experience in this meditation?

PR: That, I suggest you ask our abhyasis who are here, so many of them. They all experience different things, because each one is at a particular level of development, and according to that, experiences differ, although the thing is the same. Then you find that as they develop, you know, like a cone reaches the apex, which is only a point now, there is no more surface, similarly you find as we advance, the experiences also become more or less similar in nature. In the beginning, everything is different.

Q: Why does it become more similar as time goes on?

PR: Because the filters, which we call the samskaras, are no more there. If I look through green glass, I see green. If I look through red glass, I look at red. But the thing — what I see is the same! So these filters are removed, which are within ourselves as samskaras. You know, like prejudices — some people say, "Oh, I don't like his nose." Why not? Some people say, "Oh, those eyes are beautiful." What is beautiful with these eyes which is not beautiful with these eyes? God did not create anything ugly. But we are trained by culture, by tradition, to look upon certain things as good, certain things as bad, certain things as ugly, certain things as beautiful. A peacock is beautiful; a crow is ugly because it is black. But these are **our** creations.

Q: What distinguishes Sahaj Marg from other forms of meditation?

PR: Sahaj Marg, I think, is the only system where we have this system of cleaning. I do not think it exists anywhere else. And that makes **all** the difference, because, to take an example, if you have a bottle in which you have stored spirit, you have to clean it before you put milk in it again. Otherwise the milk is spoiled. So, cleaning is of paramount importance in Sahaj Marg, and I have not come across it anywhere, either in literature or in practice, in my fifty years of spiritual interest.

Q: When people, with their hectic Western lives (I know, 'west' being relative!) tell you, "Oh, but Chari, I'm so busy and I have a hundred things to do, and appointments. How can I possibly do this?" What do you say to them?

PR: There are several answers possible to this question. The first is, priorities. What are my priorities in life? If I have to catch a plane, even if my best friend comes, you know, and I am in a hurry, I say, "Oh, Ralph, I'll see you tomorrow. I am in a hurry," and you rush off, and you don't even think of whether your friend is going to be angry or not. Isn't it? So, that is number one.

Number two: a very senior, I think it was a minister of the government of India who asked Babuji, my Master, this question. He said, "Babuji, I am so busy. I have no time. How can I do it?" So Babuji said, "Is there anybody who is more busy than you?" He said, "Of course, there are so many people who are more busy than me." My Master said, "Tell me one example." He said, "The prime minister! He is much more busy than I am." So Babuji said, "Give me the difference between his busyness and your busyness! There is some time."

Q: Thank you very, very much.

PR: Thank you.

[Additional questions by radio interviewer:]

Q: Do you think there is a link between spirituality and art?

PR: In the opinion of my Master, there is only one real artist, and that is God, because He creates originally. His every creation is original. No two leaves are the same. No two animals are the same. Nothing is the same. Everything He creates is new. Human beings create by putting together things from God's creation. In that sense, human art is only a reflection of the true art, which is Divine art. In that sense, there is a connection. But the purer this connection becomes, the more near the Divine creation our art can become.

Q: In the beginning, art maybe was a kind of dialogue with God.

PR: It is possible, but it depends on what we call art, because even speaking is an art. So, if I know how to speak to my God correctly, without insulting Him, without calling Him names, you know, it is an artistic approach through speech. We have this idea that God has no form and no name and no attributes — the Absolute. So, we cannot have pictures of God, which is what Islam says. We cannot have pictures of God, because God has no name, no form, no attributes. The Jews, on the other side, say He has no name, but He can have a form. At least the son of God, as Christ, had a form. So now, is name an art? Is form an art? Are colours art? It is for us to see, you see, because we can have art as sound, we can have art as feeling and a sensory idea, we can have art which is heard, like the beautiful harp we heard yesterday (our abhyasi sister who played beautifully), and when we have a purified vision, we see everything as art.

So, we begin with a limited sense of art, saying that painting is art, sculpture is art, music is art, and then we get into the wider and wider and wider aspects, where we find that everything is art, or at least artistic, aesthetic, beautiful. A sunset is beautiful. We may paint it, but we didn't create a sunset. In that sense, the more pure the human being becomes in his heart, the greater his glory and the glory he finds in the art of this world.

Q: If I compare the consciousness of art in India, there is still a small link to spiritual things. Here, a lot of people come to art because they seek something, like spiritual things. Do you see this difference, too?

PR: Yes. The difference is there. For instance, even in Europe, you see the Renaissance art. It is different from the subsequent art. In a sense you can say, I mean, the use of the word 'decadent' is wrong, perhaps, but in the opinion of many people, philosophers of art, especially, the later eras of art were a decadence from the spirit of the Renaissance art. But I don't think that art, by itself, can be holy. Just because you have a representation of something that is holy, it does not become holy art, any more than when I speak of God, it becomes a holy speech!

Q: What's your personal relationship towards art in your life?

PR: I love art. You know, as I told you, I wanted to paint. I did do some painting but I was too shy and I gave it up. I did not like anybody to look at what I am doing. Later on I started music, and I almost became a professional flutist in the Indian way. But then my family opposed it. They said, "What is this music as a career? Why are you thinking of music? You are intelligent. You should be able to do so many things," and they diverted me away from music. I love dancing, I love music, and I have no inhibitions about liking anything that is good. I like Japanese music, Chinese music, oriental music, European music. For instance, one of my most favourite things is Faure's Requiem, to which I like to listen almost every day.

So, in a sense, my taste is very catholic, though I am not a Catholic myself!

Q: The last question, a stupid question: You spoke about music. Do you think some art form is more spiritual than the other, like music goes very deep...

PR: No, I don't think so. I think that, like a rose gives the perfume of the rose, but the perfume of the rose need not be a rose itself — you can have it in a bottle. Isn't it? So, as I said, just because I sing about God, it doesn't have to be holy music. The holiness is manifest in the spirit with which I sing, with what comes from the heart. The words may even be dirty, it doesn't matter. But people will still hear it as holy because it does something to them. This is the way of communication where the words don't matter at all. For instance, when I hear the Requiem of Faure, I don't understand a single word of what it says, but it does something to me. And what it does is something which is more than mere human feeling. It is something transcendent. Sometimes it makes me weep. So, I think it is a very wonderful music. There are other forms of music where they only create the erotic tendencies in you. It may be talking of God, you know, but it's useless, because the feeling it creates in me is the opposite of what they are trying to convey.

So I believe, again, to repeat what I said in the beginning, as we grow purer and purer inside, everything that we do becomes holy — not only art, but even science, music, dancing, walking. We say, "Christ walked on this planet, and the planet was made holy." But you and I are walking for all our lives, and it doesn't seem to make any change! So, whose footstep is impressed that makes it holy? It was a holy man who made a holy step. The step itself was not holy. If I retrace those steps, I cannot become a Christ. By sitting under a bodhi tree in Gaya, I cannot become a Buddha.

So you see, it is difficult to replicate in ourselves the results by merely following the external forms of what they did. I must go deep within myself and do **inside** myself what they did inside themselves — then I can become what they became.

Q: Thank you very much.

PR: Thank you.

HE IS WITHIN

Lindabrunn, Austria

24 April, 1994

Actually, spirituality is a wonderful thing. When we say wonderful, it is full of wonder, it is full of happiness, it is full of joy. It is unfortunate that the language makes things appear very serious, very dull — something not necessary for us. Especially in Occidental cultures, we find that when we speak of yoga, people say, "Let me enjoy life first, and then I will start this."

So you see, yoga has been presented in a very wrong light. Very unfortunate, because in my personal experience, and in the experience of many people here and all over the world, a life dedicated to yoga and self-development is really a joyful life. My Master always said, "Be careful of yogis who are always frowning," because they appear serious so as to impress people, as if it is something very great, something very profound — whereas a life of self-development is a life of happiness and fulfilment.

I think especially in German this is a problem, more than in other languages, because it's a serious language — too many philosophers of the German culture, too much negative thought about God and things like that, whereas God is our only real friend. We all say God is love, in all cultures, in all religions, but we are afraid of Him and we are running away from Him all the time. Why? I think it is wrong education concerning God and divinity and what is the purpose of our life. Because a friend cannot be an enemy. Nor can a real friend give me sadness and sorrow, because, by definition, a friend is one who is a friend when we are in need of him. But, instead of seeking God we seek ordinary human friends, and even the best of them have very severe limitations on how much they can help us. So, it makes sense to look for a real friend who will give his life for us. God, being the life-giver, must be the only life-giver we can ever depend upon.

So you see, some of these religions have presented God as a man who punishes you, condemns you to hell — things like that. I never believed that, nor has it been my experience. My thirty years in this yoga have been years full of joy and happiness: real joy, real happiness; inner joy, inner happiness. This is important to understand, because in a sense, we are looking for joy and happiness in things outside ourselves. Therefore, what should be our life has become totally externalised. Everything that I look for, that I need, I look for outside myself. Unfortunately, our religions tell us that even God is outside somewhere, far away. If God is everywhere and in everything, then that teaching of religion is a lie — because, if He is everywhere, He must be in me, too.

So, spirituality does not contravene or negate religion, but says, "Please go beyond." Like a child learns at school from books — in the beginning we learn from outside, but that is like the kindergarten school. Later on we learn from inside, from our experience of life. And if we depend on that, what we call Divinity, which is inside us, then comes the true experience of life. We become Self-dependent — the Self being with a capital 'S' — my Maker inside myself, my eternal Companion, my **only** companion, because all other companions are left behind sometime or the other.

At the human level, there is no permanent companion. Everyone whom we have loved or even hated will die sometime. There is no permanency in human relationships. That is one reason for the insecurity that we feel more and more in our existence. There may be so many other causes, but the impermanency of relationships is one of the major causes. Today, in our modern culture we find children are afraid. They will cling to their parents, they cannot be separated for even two minutes from the mother. Not too bad, because they are, after all, children. But when adults cling to each other and are afraid that, "When we are separated now, we may not be reunited again in the evening," what is the world coming to? Where is love? Where is companionship? Where is permanency? Where is security? And, where is life? Because without all these things, there is no life.

So you see, life is in having a permanent, steadfast, loving, trustworthy companion inside myself. Spirituality teaches us that He is right inside ourselves, shows us how to establish contact with Him, and by increasing contact, how to have faith in that Presence, and how, through that faith, to learn to let Him take over my life rather than trying to live it by myself. There is nothing strange about this, because we are always having to depend on other people. Because, a sick man depends on a doctor, parents depend on children, children depend on parents — the whole gamut of human relationships is dependence.

One of the greatest fantasies is to think that we are independent. No one is independent — no man, no woman, no child — except those who have got the source of all benefit, love, inside themselves.

So you see, people generally say, "Oh, but I don't want to be dependent on a Master or a method," but every one of you here is dependent upon everybody else. On your jobs, first. That's why you are so careful about not stopping work, why people say they don't even have time to meditate, because between work and sleep, twenty-four hours has gone. So, how are you independent? You need cars to travel in today. How are you independent? You need friends, boys or girls, it doesn't matter. How are you independent?

It is a big self-delusion to think that a human being can be independent. Spirituality says, if you want to remove all this dependence, create **one** dependence instead of all the hundreds of dependences you have now. And that person upon whom you depend is **inside** you. Therefore, there is no more betrayal, there is no question of His not being available when we need Him, there is no question of our having to look for Him, because He is here. I close my eyes and I am in instant contact with my Friend.

Therefore, you see, if God is love, and we are afraid of God, it is the result of wrong religious education. Because all religions have two instruments: fear and temptation. Fear of Hell if you do wrong things, and temptation for Heaven. But God is not in Heaven; God is in my heart, in your heart, in everybody's heart. Therefore religions have imprisoned us by giving temptation on one side, fear on the other side, like two reins of a horse or a bullock.

So you see, in spirituality there is no temptation, no fear. It is a path of evolution towards Him who is inside myself. It is not a journey to heaven somewhere, somewhen, but a journey within myself to the source of my existence. This is, in essence, what spirituality is. Therefore, my brother Otto Kapfinger said that "Where religion ends, spirituality begins." I think he also said that religions have divided human beings throughout the history of humanity. It is a well-known historical fact that the greatest atrocities have been in the name of religion.

Religion is intolerant. "My god is not your god." But everybody says there is only one God, so how can my god and your god be different? Then why does my god divide you from your god, and you from me? The whole thing is childish. The god of the Jews, the god of the Christians, the god of the Hindus, the god of the Buddhists — must be the same god. And it is surprising that we are intelligent people, educated people, and we still believe this religious nonsense that your god is the only god; my god is a fool. The tragedy is — you know, in the Middle Ages when people had no intelligence but only superstition, they could believe this nonsense, but how can we today believe this?

So you see, you have to examine your hearts, go to the source of truth here, and ask Him in meditation, "What are you? Who are you? Where are you?" Slowly, the answer will come from inside. It has to be tried, because God is not a telephone or an answering machine. Through centuries we have said, "He is there, He is there, He is there...", and this voice has become silent. We have to revive that contact, and speak to Him more and more in inner silence, because silence is the language of God.

Languages divide, religions divide, cultures divide, but the heart can bring people together. Because, as human beings we all have the same existence, we have the same needs, and we have the same possibility of growth towards the destiny of humanity. Therefore spirituality unites. No colour bar, no bar of religion, no bar of sex, no bar of race, but one possibility of unifying all humanity into a single entity which can proceed with love, faith, and confidence towards that destiny. We invite you to try it.

Thank you.

(Talk given at public meeting.)

HE GIVES THE SEED OF LIFE

Eisenarzt, Germany

30 April, 1994

I would like to start with something pleasant. Benedicte, this is the order appointing you as the Secretary of the Mission in Belgium. We have three new preceptors: Raymonde Micheleau — not here?, Julie Bowen (she lives in Granada, Spain), and Emilio Busana from Italy. Once more, Raymonde Micheleau, is she here, from Valais, Switzerland? I thought Verena was my friend, but I now see she is only my sister! [laughter] That is, incidentally, not a joke, because, it is my experience for almost thirty years now in this Mission with my Master, that Babuji Maharaj has always felt some sense of disappointment, sometimes sadness, that among brothers and sisters, there is rarely friendship. It is not an uncommon phenomenon, even in the normal world, not only Sahaj Marg, that we have friends who are not brothers and sisters and we have brothers and sisters who are not our friends. In Europe you find an extension, that even parents are not friends, and children are not friends of their parents.

Once, I was discussing this matter with Babuji Maharaj at midnight. You know, all our meetings were held at midnight for some reason, shivering in the cold, probably because we couldn't speak too much. Then Babuji said, he was wondering aloud, sort of soliloquising, as we say, whether it was not a mistake to try to create a brotherhood, rather than a group of people who could be friends.

So, it is not surprising that we have brothers and sisters who are never friendly with us. I am not only talking of the small family unit, but even larger units like this. Here, too, we find that we call ourselves brothers and sisters, but once we leave this hall, other sorts of relationships develop: linguistic groups, national groups. So, how far has spirituality succeeded in making us a true brotherhood — or as Verena added yesterday, a sisterhood, because the Germans are very specific in their... [laughter] Brotherhood does not include sisterhood, so I will add 'brotherhood and sisterhood'. How far has Sahaj Marg succeeded?

Coming back to Babuji Maharaj — he used to talk of this famous question, whether the seed came first, or the tree; the egg or the chicken, as they say in the West. He asked many philosophers, and they said, "But Babuji Maharaj, nobody has been able to answer this question." And he used to tell me, "Look how foolish our philosophers are! They are not able to answer such a simple question: whether the seed came first or the tree; whether the egg came first or the chicken." I said, "Babuji, do you have the answer?" He said, "Yes." He said, "God is not a fool to carry trees around when he can have a packet of seeds in his pocket!" [laughter]

Now, why I mention this is because, my Master, being God to me, did not carry trees around. He carried only seeds with him. In Sahaj Marg he was always talking of the process of seeding. Always seeding. He said, "I seed the heart of the people who come to me." Thereafter, we have to make that seed grow. That is why I said, "Garden of Hearts" — a garden, *jardin*. We have to cultivate. It is not enough to have a packet of seeds presented to us by the Master. Sarnadji's story is very beautiful. That fellow was able to make better use of a dead donkey than we are able to make of the seeds given to us by our Master. He gives us the seed of life. Transmission means, *prana* to *prana* — transmission of life of the Master to the life of the abhyasi, awakening the life inside, the latent, the potential, the long-subdued. So, he puts this seed in us, and then he tries very carefully to remove the weeds, the thorns, the brambles, by the process of cleaning, in which we are to co-operate, and by the process of transmission, which we are to receive, and a set of principles he has given to us, like meditation, remembrance, prayer, and of course, the ten maxims.

Once, Babuji was asking a group of abhyasis, strangely enough, from Tirupati. He wanted to know the Ten Maxims — whether anybody could recite them. Some were able to mention two or three, some four, but nobody all ten. So, Babuji said, "Look here. Nobody knows the ten commandments." They were all very sorry, very upset. They all rushed up to their rooms and they found the books missing, so they had to go and buy them — which was good for the Mission, we sold some books! — you know, Babuji's *Commentary on the Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg*. After they all left, Babuji puffed on his hookah thoughtfully for a few minutes and then said to me, "Look here. I want to tell you a secret." I said, "Yes, what?" He said, "I, too, do not know them!" [laughter]

But we must not mistake this pleasantry, that we can emulate Babuji in **not** knowing things, because he did not know anything. Nevertheless, he had the seed in himself. The seed which Lalaji Maharaj planted in him had grown into a big tree, flowered, and broadcast its seeds. For him, everything was accessible. He did not know anything. He was one of those people who knew nothing, yet had all knowledge accessible on call, very much like a computer. Now, we believe in our computers, we depend on them, we feed information into them so that when we forget, we can retrieve it.

Often I think these memory devices which the Western science and technology have produced, which fascinate us, are doing us great harm, because instead of making us depend on ourselves to remember things, we carry computers around nowadays. "What is the telephone number of Don Sabourin?" Switch it on, punch the secret code, if you have one, use your mouse (strangely enough, it's called a mouse!), and get into whichever program you have to get into, access the alphabet, access the name, telephone number. Voila! You have it — takes seven minutes! But if we can remember it, it is instantaneous.

So, if you study the development of human beings from the primitive ages, through the middle ages, through the modern age which we are still passing through, we do not know where it is going to end. Often I fear that it will become a full circle and get back into primitivism all over again. It is not just a vague fear. It is a very real fear, because in nature everything tends to be cyclical. If the stories of Atlantis are to be believed, there **was** a flourishing civilisation much better than ours, and it disappeared. It disappeared because people started using or misusing power, misusing knowledge, misusing technology for personal gain. Great empires have fallen like that. Whether it be the Sumerian, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Roman — all fell because they started misusing what had been given to them. Nothing is exempt from this fall when there is misuse.

Now, we are misusing our knowledge. Instead of using our heads, we are using machines. On one side, it is really superb, what we can do in this material world. The fascination of technological advance, development, the creation that technology makes possible: material creation, mechanical creation, electronic creation. But unfortunately, side by side, it makes us think we are creators. Only a creator of **life** is a creator. All the others are simply machinists, engineers, draftsmen, architects, what have you. **Merely** — no insult intended, but I hope people will get this lesson in humility. That, by preparing a computer, you have not really created anything; you have put together things which you have learned from birds, animals — the bats which fly, the whales, the homing instinct of the pigeon — so many things you have put together. They have taught us these things. It is a well-known fact that, by observation of the bat, radar was discovered. Newton needed an apple to discover gravity.

So you see, we have always learned things from nature, not from technology, not from science. Science is only a codification of what we have learned from nature. And then we begin to divorce that science from the nature from which it has come up. Therefore Babuji said, "Be simple and in tune with nature." Go back to nature, because nature continues to teach us at all levels. Technology only limits us to one level. Nature makes us free. Nature makes us alert to everything that nature has to offer. I mean, we have all picked up apples which have fallen from trees, but how many Newtons has it produced? We have all seen bats flying by at night; how many people have become scientists or technologists because of those bats?

So, the person who was alert to the lessons that nature had to teach, learned. He became famous, he got a Nobel Prize. Why he became famous, I don't know, because his guru was the bat! Newton's guru must be the apple — if he ever built a temple, that fellow should have built a temple to a big apple! Maybe that is why the Apple computer is called 'Apple', though we can't eat it!

So you see, in going back to nature we have a perennial source of knowledge, of wisdom, of revelation, at all levels, from the merely gross, from the hungry man who picks up the apple and bites it to satisfy his hunger, to the scientist who discovers gravitation through the same apple. Computers cannot do this. Scientists cannot do this. Babuji's call to go back to nature was not a call to go back to primitivism. Babuji was a most delicate, most sensitive, most, what shall I say, thoroughbred of thoroughbreds. We have pedigrees for horses and dogs, but what about a thoroughbred like him, who bred himself, using his Master as the instrument of breeding in himself all that was great, noble, talented, divine.

So you see, the seed is sown by the Master. Lalaji sowed the seed in Babuji Maharaj, and so many disciples, thousands of them. But unfortunately, like the parable of the sower — the sower went forth and sowed the seeds. Some fell on rocky ground and were eaten up by the birds of the air; those disciples are lost. Some fell among thorns and brambles and were killed before their life potential could manifest.

In the Hindu philosophy, in the Hindu way of life, in the demand of the Hindu yogic system, there is no room for any other person in one, except your guru or God. Kabir has said that the way of love is so narrow that even two cannot walk on it. No holding of hands, no arms around the waist, no smooching — not possible in spirituality. No lover's lane.

You all know that story about the footsteps in the sand, about a dream a young girl like her had, where God was her companion and was leading her through to the goal. When she reached the goal, she found two pairs of footsteps, but in some places only one pair of footsteps. She was very upset. She said, "I thought you were my friend and you are always with me, but it seems you were deserting me along those places." God laughed and said, "My child, in those places it was very difficult and I carried you. Therefore only one set of footsteps, and they are mine, not yours!"

So you see, a place where we can walk two by two is a dangerous place, or it is too easy to be useful. It is in the narrowest razor's edge of yogic practice, yogic sadhana, yogic discipline, where the Guru alone can walk with the abhyasi in his arms, cradled in his arms lovingly, like a mother holding her baby. Therefore Babuji Maharaj preferred to think of the guru as a mother.

So, we have to be very careful in how we form our relationships. I am always hearing this word 'relationship' in Europe. When I come here, I hear nothing but 'relationship'. "I am having problems in my relationships — my affective life." And, like that fellow about whom Jagjit Singh sings in one of his famous *ghazals*, where the man says, "I often amuse myself by explaining to others what I don't understand myself," I also do the same thing. I explain to others about affective relationships when I don't know what they really mean. I have not the faintest idea of what an affective relationship is. But yet, because I see the agony on their faces, the tears in their eyes, the sorrow in their voice, the stoop in their shoulders — young girls, already old women, because like a mis-played musical instrument, they have been damaged beyond repair — it is easy to understand without understanding words. Human beings should not need to communicate with words to understand each other.

God is not a fool to communicate with us in silence. Babuji said, "God's language is silence." Why should we be silent in meditation? People come and present to me cassettes of great Sufi music. Of course, I have to accept politely. It would not be right to say, "No, no. I don't like it. I don't want it," but we must avoid all this nonsense. Music while we are meditating — what on earth for? How will we communicate, or rather, how will He communicate with us? And it is too stupid to say that God can communicate when He wishes, whether there is noise or not. He cannot. I repeat, He cannot. He needs, like we need, to speak in His language. I can only speak to you in my language. I cannot speak to you in French or German or in Russian or Czechoslovak. I can only speak to you in my language. If you don't understand it, it's just too bad.

So you see, the paramount need to learn the language of Him who is going to teach you, who is going to be your guide, not only through this life, but through eternity. Once you have crossed the borders of death, which language shall we speak? There is no body, there is no tongue, there is no brain, there is no intelligence, there are no more languages — yet there is that one eternal language of God: silence. Therefore they say, "The silence of the grave." But unfortunately, it is misused. The 'silence of the grave' is used to terrify people, to create horror stories upon, like *Psycho* and all these nonsensical films which give you, I don't know, traumatic dreams for perhaps the rest of your life.

So you see, the grave is silent precisely because after death I don't know any language, I have lost the ability to speak. In fact, I have nothing to speak with. But should we wait till we are dead for God to communicate with us? Or should I allow Him to communicate with me right now, by sitting in silence, humbly, patiently, with a receptive state of mind and heart? Because, where we receive Divine guidance is not in the brain, but in the heart. The brain is only a stupid computer, ill-designed, ill-used. It has immense capacity, but we are only playing tricks with it. Like I play games with my expensive computer. I am not qualified to do anything more. My grandson sits on my lap, he knows the password, he punches it in, he puts "WIN" and ENTER, Windows appears, and we play — games! It's exactly what we are doing. I am not the only one! Don't laugh, I am not the only one. Any computer guy here will testify that he spends at least two hours a day on games! They are fascinating. Knowledge is not fascinating. Play is fascinating.

So you see, we are playing the same tricks with our brains. First of all, we have an immensely capable brain, beyond compare, an instrument beyond compare, designed by Him himself. And we use hardly three percent of its capacity. It is a well-known psychological truth that even a genius has hardly used ten percent of his brain capacity. We use perhaps three percent or less. But what are we doing with **those** three percent? Playing tricks with ourselves, playing tricks with others, cheating them, cheating ourselves, lying to them, lying to ourselves, all our time spent on planning for the next stage of pleasure in our existence. Pleasure and yoga don't go together. Please repeat — pleasure and yoga don't go together. And don't confuse pleasure with happiness! Because I can anticipate some questions: "But how can we be happy without pleasure?" We can be! Pleasure is not necessary. Pleasure is a titillation of the senses.

You know, I am very frightened to think what is going to happen to the Occidental civilisation by this new demon they have created which they call 'virtual reality'. I know my psychiatric friends here will not appreciate what I am going to say, because they have not appreciated in the past. But I don't care. Truth is the truth, whether the psychiatrists agree or not. They are not founders of truth and lies. They are only trying to mishandle situations which, in themselves, they are not qualified to handle, most of them.

So you see, this business of virtual reality — I can't handle my own mundane reality, and I slip on a pair of earphones and goggles and go off into some drama, from which it is recorded that many people have come out raging mad, their brains damaged beyond repair. And this is being sold, advertised in magazines, even in magazines like *Omni*, which I used to think well of. What will people not do for money nowadays? Virtual reality. Are we dealing here with 'virtual yoga'? I hope not! Because from the way people talk of their relationships, affective and otherwise, often I am tempted to think that our satsangh is being misused, only for creating relationships and un-creating them when they have fallen on our senses.

I am not in the mood to be friendly today, of course, as you can guess from what I am saying! But I have never believed in a friendship where a friend cannot tell the truth to his friends. My Master always told me the truth. Being less than him, I tried to tell him the truth most of the time. There are truths which we know he knows, which for some reason we are unwilling to unfold in his presence. I asked Babuji once, "Why do you want us to tell you the truth? You are the all-knower. You know everything." He said, "It is good for the ego to tell the truth to the guru." You must be able to be so humble, so unassuming, so selfless, that even the dirtiest thing that we have done, we should be able to go and tell the guru, "This I have done. Forgive me." It is not that he does not know. I mean, if **you** can know, how can **he** not know? It is only animals which commit what we call 'sin' without knowing that they sin, and therefore they don't sin. The sin is in the **knowledge** of the sin, not in the **act** of the sin.

So, when we clean our consciousness, when we clean our hearts, and the Divine communication starts, very very very feeble in the beginning; you can hardly even make out whether there is some communication or not. Babuji Maharaj had to sometimes listen — **even** Babuji Maharaj had to listen sometimes — three times, four times, waiting for it to be repeated. Sometimes there is confusion. Not being used to stillness or silence, when something suddenly comes, we are confused. We miss the first few words. So, we have to wait. The communication must be complete. It must be confirmed, like in a computer: 'Y/N'. If you press the 'N', God forbid, you will never listen to it again. "Too late, too large to retrieve," says the computer! So also says God. He says, "My son, deeper silence. My voice cannot be heard in this clamour that you are creating in this world, in this universe of yours."

Therefore today, humanity has lost the power of communication with its source. We are able to tune our radios so that we eliminate the static. Why? Because we want to listen to that which is coming through. But here, we don't have the patience. We don't have the need. We don't perceive the need for that communication. So, why should the communicator communicate? I mean, He is not an idle fellow sitting there, tapping away his message, you know, hoping somebody will receive it. Like the great Asimov wrote about, in the search for 'artificial intelligence', as they call it. I don't know how intelligence can be artificial at all! Extraterrestrials. Billions and billions of dollars spent on antennae and equipment, waiting to filter out something which can be translated into what they call 'intelligent messages'. But do they know our language? If you and I cannot understand each other, how are you going to understand extraterrestrials? How are you going to understand God?

So you see, the seed has to be sown, in a sense, buried. Every seed has to be buried. You cannot leave it nicely on one of these beautiful German porcelain plates — lovely seed, mature. It has to be buried in the dank earth. It has to die. Only when a seed dies, the sprout comes up. That is why in our meditation, we often experience situations or experiences which we call 'as if we are almost dead'. That is why Babuji insisted on the state of the living dead. Our meditation must become so deep that there is no awareness left, there is no consciousness left.

I told you one or two years back, in Augerans, very often I find this problem nowadays. It is a problem because I am afraid you will all laugh at me. We are deep in meditation, and suddenly I come up to a certain level of consciousness, and I don't know whether I have to begin or to end the sitting. It is not a joke, it is a real problem. Even yesterday, I did not know. Then, when I opened my eyes and saw everybody with eyes closed, I said, "Yes, it must have begun some time ago. Let me stop it now!" [laughter] This is the reality of meditation. No time consciousness, no space consciousness, no self-consciousness at all. But we don't want it. We are afraid. We say, "Yes, but I **want** to know who I am! How can I work without knowing who I am? If my boss calls me on the telephone..." Silly, stupid excuses. We are not talking of your boss now. We are talking of **the** boss. His communication transcends all other communication. When He wishes to communicate, all other channels have to be closed — boss or no boss, wife or no wife, husband or no husband, or relationship or no relationship. Unless you are prepared for that, you will only be eating apples which are falling from trees — windfall, *abfall* they call it in German. So, we are only fit to eat the apple, not to discover gravitation.

So, the need to meditate carefully, with perseverance, day after day after day, not setting a time limit to God. We cannot tell God, "Hey, look here. I am free for three hours. If you care to communicate with me, do it. Otherwise, damn you!" That's not possible, because He doesn't hear us. He doesn't know our language. He doesn't even know what we are trying to say. It is like the child — when it is babbling, you don't know what it is saying. And it is like Babuji — when his final days came, he wanted to speak; nobody could understand. Unless you could really understand Babuji from the heart, you could not understand him from the speech.

So, the secret of meditation, the secret of sadhana, is to learn not only to become absolutely silent inside, but even, for instance, when you are listening to me and I am speaking to you, if suddenly that communication starts, I must be able to cut everything and say, "Yes." You have seen Master doing it. I have seen Babuji often doing it. He is working and suddenly he would stop and say, "Hmm, hmm," like that, you know? The world is finished for him at that moment; only He exists. And sometimes he would tell us what happened; sometimes he would just, you know, tease us, and sometimes even infuriate us by giving us tidbits and then withholding the rest. But that was meant to make us want to be like him. If he teased us with bits of sweets, bits of knowledge, bits of intercommunication with Lalaji, it was not that he should tell us what he heard from his Master, but it was to train us how we, in turn, can listen to that same voice within us, without the need for any intermediary. Now, if you don't do this, we are failures.

Of course, the tidbits are always there. The crumbs of bread, the leftovers of yesterday's party — they are all there for us to eat. But what about reality? What about the truth? What about that which is behind the fact behind the fact? Babuji spoke of negation. Then he spoke of negation of negation — very very very difficult man to understand. He said, "There is nothing here," according to what Sarnadji told us in his story, but from that nothingness comes forth everything. When you have something, only that something can come. When you have nothing, everything can come. This is the old Upanishadic truth, it is the old Vedic statement: "From nothing comes everything."

So, don't go by that song in *The Sound of Music*: "Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could." **Everything** comes from nothing, and it has always done so. Everything that has meaning, that has life, and that can lead us to the goal — three things we need to understand. Meaning of life. Don't think you are intelligent when you come and ask, "Why was I born?" Every fool asks this question, but no intelligent man has ever asked this question. Only fools ask such stupid questions. "Why was I born? I did not want to be born." Who cares what you wanted or what you did not want? It is arrogance to think that a teenager, or a forty-year-old philosopher, or a seventy-five-year-old professor of philosophy can pretend to have the right to knowledge, least of all to ask, "Why was I born?" A guru who could afford to be honest would say, "Because you are a fool. Otherwise you would not be here!" Naturally, you see, because he was foolish enough in a past, where he went on creating samskara after samskara, and that brought him here. You don't need any other answer. No nonsense of husband and wife sleeping together to produce a child — that is purely a physiological reason. And why **you** in that particular parentage, in that particular nationality? Because you created samskaras like that.

So, like Albert Einstein said, learn to ask real, meaningful questions. Don't go after answers. When you know how to ask and what to ask and whom to ask, and more important, **what** to ask, then truth is revealed. A guru doesn't answer questions easily, because he says, "If I tell this man or woman the answer, what use are they going to make of it?" They are going to write it down in their diary and forget it when they go, and like all good Europeans do, they will lose the handbag in the train or the bus, and with it goes the diary! *"J'ai perdue le journal."* It's very easy. Europeans are always using diaries. I sometimes feel, you know, that they have such a deep guilt complex that first of all, they cannot afford to write what they feel, and if they have the minimum bit of courage required to write what they have experienced, they don't have the courage to **keep** the diary. So they lose it. This is, in a Freudian sense, very correct.

But for heaven's sake, the diary is a substitute for a confession before the Master. What we cannot, what we dare not say before him in his presence, we write in the diary and post to him. The trauma of personally falling at his feet on your knees, and all this nonsense, you see, is removed in one stroke. He in the privacy of his house, you in the privacy of your house, yet the message is passed: "Lord, forgive me. *Mea culpa*." But here there is no *culpa*, there is no forgivingness, there is only the need for more cleaning.

Babuji says, "Clean." "Yes, but I have cleaned for so long and I don't find the effect." Yes, because you are like this harpist or the piano player, selecting notes: "This I want cleaned, this I want to keep." But why do you want to keep this? "My affective relationship! I cannot let it go. *Mon cuppola!*" Here, there is no selective cleaning. There is cleaning, or no cleaning. Don't fool yourself by thinking that you can clean something and leave the rest because it is pleasant to have it. It cannot be done. When we are prepared and say, "Master, I surrender. Clean everything," he allows whatever he needs for you to remain. You have no permission to retain. He has a permission of God, of his Master, to permit things in you which he thinks are still necessary for you to grow. Remember that even samskaras which remain in us are necessary for two very essential things. One, is that without samskara we cannot live. Second, that certain samskaras are necessary for our further growth, after which they will be removed. Like you prune a grapevine completely to its base after the harvest is over. Then it grows again.

So, the Master is not a fool, you know. "Oh, this man is meditating for twenty-five years. He still gets angry." That is his problem. "This man is still eating too much." That is his problem. Why should we bother about others? Have we enough time to bother about ourselves, correct ourselves, liberate ourselves? We don't, because we are spending all the time available to us looking outside, criticising everybody else, and as it is said in the Bible, he forgets the beam in his own eye, but looks at the mote in the other man's eyes. Always look at yourself. If you see somebody getting angry, know that that anger is in you; otherwise you would not recognise it. You know, small children have to be told, "This is a cat. This is a crow," because they have never seen it before. That is innocence. Seeing, they don't know. Knowing, we don't see — invertendo.

So you see, surrender means, also, permitting him to remove everything in you. If he wishes to totally destroy everything in you, yes, it is his problem. Like the harp cannot be tuned by simply tuning one string. "Ting, ting, ting, ting, ...," he goes on, you see, it takes half an hour to tune that simple instrument. Similarly, everything here has to go before he can create. Why do we have to weed our lawns? Why do we have to prune? Because, if you want to allow something to grow, all the things which interfere with that growth must be removed.

So you see, Sahaj Marg depends on seeds. Don't expect trees. The Master will not bring cherry tree, mango tree, guava tree, oak tree, and plant them in your garden and say, "Wonderful. *Wunderbar*, you have created a garden." That is nonsense. More, it's a lie. But he gives you the seeds, he sows it in the filthy hearts that are ours when we first come to him, because the seed must be sown. It cannot wait until the soil is clean, because it may never be fit. Therefore he, in his magnanimity, in his wisdom, and in his Divine ability, capacity, is able to throw the seed into absolute muck, knowing that in a few sittings, he can clean out the muck and regenerate that soil, so that the seed which he has sown there shall, must, and will sprout. Then, if we have the patience, the continuing cleaning that keeps the tree healthy as it grows, his continuing transmission is like what you do in your gardens with a water pot. And one day the miracle can happen that, inside you there is a full-grown tree, and now it is beginning to throw out flowers, which become fruit, which throw off millions of seeds — and there you have another teacher.

So, that is the way of the spiritual life. It is not demanding. It is not difficult. Don't be misled. It is simple. It is easy. What is difficult is this: "No, no, but how can I let go?" Just let go! If you are hanging from a rope from a tree and you don't know how to jump, and people are waiting below with a blanket held and say, "Jump," will you not let go? Or will you go on hanging there until you can hang no longer and you fall to death?

This is what happens to human beings. They are unable to let go when there is help. The helper walks on, miserable because there is one soul which he cannot assist, perhaps, and this soul which is destined to destroy itself, destroys itself. It is absolutely easy. Only two or three things are necessary. That when we talk of transformation, it means total transformation — not partial, not according to what you want, but according to what He wants. That needs faith, that he **can** do it. Three, that needs patience. Without faith there is no patience. Without an understanding of our goal and the spiritual life that we are going to lead, there can be no faith.

Therefore we have books, therefore we have talks, but basically, you are the instrument because you must allow the speaker to write in your heart the essence of what he is saying — sow the seed. Let him weed it. Let him plant it. Let him water it. And one day you will find that, miraculously, without your even knowing of it, this transformation has taken place. How do you know? Not by looking in the mirror, but because people tell you, "Oh, you have changed so much!" There is no more any ego associated with this growth, because you have not contributed anything except to be patient and receptive.

Sahaj Marg is the only way that I know of where people can grow without being egotistic. Where people can grow without knowing they are growing, like a child grows up and it is not aware that it is growing. You know, every child has asked his parents this question, at least in India, when they look at the wedding photographs of their parents, "But mommy, why am I not there?" Every child, because it is too innocent; it does not know that it comes after marriage — as it should! [laughter] That is just a parting shot, but nevertheless, a necessary shot! Because everything, in its right place, in its right time, leads to harmonious living. A marriage is the beginning, not the end of romance.

The beginning of the association with the Guru is a marriage with the Guru. It is in every sense a marriage, because he seeds the heart. That is why you call them 'seminars'. That is why there are 'seminaries'. It comes from the English word 'semen', or the Latin word, I don't know which. It is a process of insemination, where the spiritual creative power of the guru is put into the receptive feminine heart of the disciple. That is why, in the Hindu tradition, there is only one male. He is called the *Paramapurush*. Here, sex is only for procreation and for breeding — it has no meaning. Man or woman, it makes no difference.

So, let us not depend on these differences for our love affairs and our love life and our love satisfaction, but on this Divine love affair with Him, with whom our association will be eternal, with whom our marriage will be fruitful, with whom we shall walk hand in hand, right to the ends of eternity.

Thank you.

IV

Europe

May, 1994

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Eisenarzt, Germany

3 May, 1994

We should love but not be attached. You see, for the male it is the ego and for the woman it is attachment. Sahaj Marg is not partial, it can never be. In Sahaj Marg, when we talk of no difference of race, caste or sex, we really mean it. But if that woman had walked out with her husband whom she helped to transform, that would have been a wonderful end because according to the spiritual tradition in India, when the husband and wife have raised a family, helped the girls get married, put the boys on their own feet, they are supposed to go off together. In the Indian tradition, there is no going away by a man himself. In fact, it is forbidden. And the spiritual law also says that whenever you perform even the ritualistic sacrifice, the wife must be with you. Without the wife, no sacrifice is possible.

There is a beautiful story from the Ramayana. After Sita had passed away, after Rama put her to the test — she left after the two tests, she went back into the ground from which she came — Rama has a statue of Sita made and in the presence of the statue he is performing a big *yagna*. And his twins who were born in the forest and raised by a rishi, they come. They don't know that Rama is their father. And they mock him. They say, "What is this mockery? Where is the wife without whom you cannot do this? Can a mere idol, even of gold, replace your wife?" And then there is a quarrel and they pick up their bows and start shooting at him. But He is the Lord of the Universe and so the arrows just go and fall at His feet. Then they realise that this is their father. But they don't give up on this idea that he cannot perform the sacrifice any more. "Where is your wife? Where is my mother?"

In the Hindu tradition, the wife has a very important place. And such stories as Sarnadji said are to give a certain impact to the male mind or the female mind as the case may be. But the real tradition is that the husband and the wife go off together and live in the forest, in what they call *vaanaprastha*, that is, going into the forest. And there they lead a life together, the rishi and his wife, both supporting each other in their spiritual quest. And then one day when he becomes very great, a couple of young people come. They see him meditating, they want to become his disciples and another ashram begins. This is the real tradition. We should not be misled by stories. We also tell stories for effect but the reality is this, the *shastra* is this. And in fact in the Indian tradition, the celibate sanyasi is a new creation of Shankara who came in the ninth century A.D. With him came this idea of celibate monkhood — sanyasis. Before that there were no sanyasis. All the rishis were married. As I have remarked so often, many rishis had two wives.

Abhyasi: Too much of a good thing...

PR: No, no, they had two wives because they had an ashram, it was legitimate. It was not an *affaire de couer*, an *amore* [love]. Yajnavalkya, the great rishi, had two wives. One was very materialistic-minded. She only looked after their plants and the flowers, cooked their food, and things like that. The other one was very spiritual. And when she approaches him for knowledge, he tells her the great Upanishad called the *Brihadaranyaka*. He tells her, "Not for your sake, my dear, are you dear to me, but it is for the sake of myself, that you are dear to me. Not for the sake of your son, is he dear to you. But for the sake of yourself is he dear to you." And this is what happens, this is attachment. If you love, you would love for his sake. With attachment we think of them for our sake.

Now in a spiritual brotherhood like this, where the guru is sometimes called the *param pita*, the ultimate father, he is not attached to anybody, yet he loves all. So it is possible for him to let people go, allow people to come, accept people as they are, and then transform them into what they have to be. There are no rules that you must qualify: fill up this entrance form, and questions like, "Have you passed this ...? Have you done this ...? Have you had a sexual relationship?" [laughter] We don't have all this nonsense. But we expect that you want to change and therefore we accept you. Not otherwise. If people say, "No, no, I want to be as I am, but yet part of your group," — what for? It doesn't make sense to belong to our group and say, "I want to be as I am. I only came for company, Chari."

The spiritual tradition in India is largely misunderstood because of Shankara and his philosophy. I know people like Sanskrit *pandits* will say, "No!" But Ramanuja is praised by my Master because he brought love into the scene. Lord Krishna, as an avatar, brought the idea of love and devotion, which combined together make what we call *bhakti*. Therefore when Arjuna asks, "Whom do you love the most?" He says, "The *bhakta*." So Krishna introduced into the world for the first time, the concept of love between the master and the disciple, or anybody for that matter of fact. In that tradition we have Ramanuja, Kabir, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. All of them are important saints in India and they are *bhakti* people who say, "Love transcends everything. God is love. And if God is love, should we not become love too?" Not that we love as a verb, but **becoming** love.

So in that tradition, we have Ramanuja, his guru and his disciples. Then we have Ramananda who was Kabir's guru, and Kabir himself who was a Muslim weaver — the four great personalities who spread this idea of love and devotion rather than celibacy and an ascetic, austere life. It is a total misunderstanding. In fact, *advaita* has created a lot of trouble in India according to Babuji and I totally agree. It has created scandalous behaviour by men who have left their wives, abandoned their wives. Babuji said, "Why do you marry?" If you marry, you have a duty. You cannot escape out of this duty until you have fulfilled it. And part of your duty is to also look to the liberation of your wife. You cannot just use her for your pleasure, have children and then one day say, "*Tata*, I am going." You cannot go. Therefore marriage is a lifetime affair. All these ideas of morality and all, I don't agree. You can have as many love affairs as you like, if you are not spiritual. But once you come into the spiritual life, now love becomes something that binds people together. It cannot separate people. I cannot say that I love you and then say tomorrow, "I love her, so *ciao* [good bye]." Not possible. Only God can love everybody.

So marriage is not a bondage. It is love which binds us, not marriage. Marriage is only a sort of a sacramental thing where in front of witnesses I marry her so that my association with her is in some way sanctified, legitimised. It has the sanction of law, the sanction of custom and the sanction of religion — the three things. People make a grave mistake and unfortunately, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa married and yet the Mission that his successor Swami Vivekanada founded is of celibate monks. Like Babuji has said, "God is not a fool to create two sexes if one was enough." There is some purpose for creating two sexes. Now, that purpose you have to live by. That is all that morality means. We have, in a sense, to undo all the mischief that these *advaitis* have done. It all started because of Adi Sankara. That is why Babuji said that he has not been liberated. You know it is a funny thing that Sankara, who had travelled all over India on foot by the age of thirty- two, preaching, who was the author of some of the greatest Sanskrit works — yet no liberation! But Ramanuja, preaching *bhakti* and singing the name of the Lord, was liberated. So you have to think about these things.

So, the Hindu religion is not well represented in the West, because of Sankaracharya, Buddhism and Vivekananda.

Abhyasi: What about Meera?

PR: Meera was also married. But let us not worry about that. Let us worry about our liberation. So we should think of ourselves and do what is necessary to achieve this liberation. Sahaj Marg is not a celibate way, but at the same time, it is not the way of free expression either. It is like the train — it must run on the tracks. It cannot say, "No, no, I don't like discipline. I want to go everywhere." It cannot go. It will crash. So for the train to move, we need the tracks. For the car to go, we need the road. "Oh, I am a free Frenchman. I will drive in the field." Vrrrrrrroooom! And then we have to call a truck to pull it out. That is the Master, poor fellow. He has to come, take a crane, pull the car out, wash it and clean it.

Abhyasi: Chari, two days ago, at the Youth meeting, you said that if you cannot marry the person you love, then love the person you marry.

PR: You have to.

Abhyasi: How much does it matter who you marry?

PR: In India we believe that your partner is already chosen by you in the past. Not in the sense of love being something that transcends death and we come again and again together. That is all nonsense. That is romantic blah, blah. But in between states, between the past life and this life, there is an interregnum where the soul decides how it can evolve in its next appearance on earth. And there everything is settled.

Abhyasi: What happens if somebody just married somebody at say, nineteen, you fall in love with somebody or you think you do and marry them. What happens then?

PR: You stick with her.

Abhyasi: Can we evolve in the same manner?

PR: Yes, you have to evolve. Suppose you have a diseased wife, a sick wife. If you do your duty in a faithful, loving manner, both of you are emancipated. Otherwise life after life you will have a sick woman to deal with.

Abhyasi: What about the karmic law?

PR: This is the karmic law. A woman has a child which is, let us say, abnormal. You cannot throw it away. You have to look after it. It is the 'cross you have to bear' as they say in English. Christ had his cross to bear; we have our cross to bear. And if you bear that cross, you don't have to bear it again. It is like a job. If you don't do today's work, you have to do today's work and tomorrow's work tomorrow. Isn't it? Otherwise you are kicked out. It is a law which is universal in its application. So having created this life for ourselves, before we were born, if we live that life correctly, taking it as it comes in the spirit of faith and love, you are liberated. You don't need guru and meditation and all this nonsense; these are all absolute rubbish. But why do we need this? Because we go here and there, meandering. You choose the right person to fall in love with at the age of nineteen. Suddenly you see a nice ankle or whatever it is you know. I mean you must fall in love with something with which you **can** fall in love.

So when we accept that what we have done had to be done, there is acceptance now and I know that this is necessary — everything comes because **I** have destined my destiny, nobody else.

Abhyasi: As long as you accept your decision wholeheartedly, you cannot make a mistake?

PR: You cannot make a mistake. Well I could, for instance, say to all of you now "Get the bloody hell out of here. I am tired of you. I am sick of you". Like some Americans say. I might end up in the other world. Because it is a duty, and being a duty, I should not do it with hatred in my heart. I have told often that nurses in the hospitals do their duty. But it is an informal robotic sort of duty, very clean, very clinical. Injection at nine o'clock, feeding at 12:30, pulse at one o'clock. Isn't it? That is not duty. That is work for which you are paid. Now when we do that same duty with love, when the nurse really looks after the man because he is sick, because he is a human being and not because she is a nurse, then the relationship changes altogether. Now sympathy comes, love comes, she looks after him as a living being, not as a patient.

In a hospital, a patient is no better than a dead person, a corpse. And when they die, they just cover their faces and wheel them out. No emotion. Of course they will say, "But Chari, I cannot afford an emotion when twenty people die everyday in this hospital." Well suppose twenty people in your family died, would you not have emotion? But people come and say, "Three years ago my grand mother died. I loved her very much" — tissue. "Last year my mother whom I loved very much died" — another tissue. "This year my father died." Did you really love them? "No, no we never had a good relationship. I hated my grandmother, I never saw her in twenty years." It is guilt which makes you weep, not love.

Love can never make you weep — culpability. So whenever I see people weeping, there is this element of guilt coming out. Yet it is good. So I tell people, "Alright you hated your grandmother, go and see her now." You know how many people here can tell you that they wrote to me that they hated their mother. "I have not seen her for eighteen years." They hated their father for twenty years. I say, "Go and give him a hug, he is your father. Hug him and give him a kiss. The whole thing will melt like ice in the sun." And it does. And if the man is dying, you have to go to him, sit near him, hold his hands and say, "Papa I am sorry, you see we have never met for twenty years but I love you." He weeps because he is also guilty, because in some way he is responsible for the separation. You weep. Everything is clean and his death is now a peaceful, happy death. And they write to me and say, "When he died Chariji, I felt Babuji's presence and your presence and it was so peaceful." How? Because of this love. Even if at the very last moment, a man feels that he is loved or wanted, he cannot be unhappy when he dies.

All these bitter, painful, nauseating deaths are because of guilt. Father's guilt against the children — he marries a woman and has two children, marries another woman, has two children, marries a third woman and has two children and they are all unhappy. All right, having done it, integrate the whole thing with love. It does not mean that you have to build a house in which all of us can live together, that doesn't work. We live together in a hostel but we are all strangers. We are together in a hospital, we are not friends. So we must understand the role that love plays. Love is not just kissing and hugging. Love is from here [pointing to the heart]. And when that comes, it divinises everything. So divinisation is not some miracle that one can say, "Christ shall come into me and I shall see him coming in the form of light descending into me and into my heart." No nonsense. That is another romantic nonsense. I change from inside.

Abhyasi: What do you think about divorce and separation?

PR: I don't like it. Because it is destructive. It destroys the family, destroys children. In the modern world, there is no concern for children. They pretend to love them, they buy them good clothes, good shoes, put them in good schools. But when they don't like their wife, they just leave them like that. They don't think of the children. What will happen to my children? Selfish, totally selfish. And naturally the children hate them.

Abhyasi: And when the man goes and leaves the woman alone with the children, what should the woman do?

PR: She should look after them.

Abhyasi: And he pretends to be the father.

PR: Well, they pretend because they are also guilty. They come and give you some money once in six months. Otherwise why should they give money? And then they go to court and say, "**Once** a year I must see my son." Once a year I must see my son! That is enough! What nonsense! I would like to see my son everyday. Not once a year or for a week when the court says I should see him: eleventh November to eighteenth November.

Abhyasi: And what must the woman do with such a man?

PR: Well, she cannot do anything when he has left her. She should think that he is dead. That's all. Finished. Suppose he had died, what would she do?

Abhyasi: [inaudible] he is not dead!

PR: He is not dead but for you, he is dead. Let him go.

Abhyasi: But he comes to see his son and daughter.

PR: Well if he comes with love, you can let him. But if he comes thinking that he has some right, then you have to tell him, "You have no right. You have no right anymore because you left them and went."

Abhyasi: If the wife receives him with love, maybe he will change...

PR: There is no point in this 'if' business. He must come with love. Suppose an abhyasi leaves the Mission and goes. What the guru has to do is his business. There is no point in telling him, "No, no, suppose the guru had loved him, he would not have left." It is ridiculous. Of course, the guru has to love. He loves. But love does not mean, "All right, you smoke hashish. Do you want to go for [inaudible]? Yes, you can go, that does not matter. I will transmit." How can it be? Love must be disciplined also.

Abhyasi: Chariji, if there is someone in my family, like my sister and her husband are having such problems. Is there something that I should do or say?

PR: Always prayer, nothing else. No interference. Just pray for them. When you sit in meditation, think of them and say, "Lord, help them."

Abhyasi: Can you pray for yourself?

PR: You never pray for yourself. It is not allowed. The law does not allow you to pray for yourself. If you have faith in your Master and you accept that all that happens to you is for your good, what will you pray for?

Abhyasi: Can we pray for our spiritual evolution?

PR: We work for spiritual evolution, not pray. Sadhana is work. So in an abhyasi's life there is no prayer for the self, even for spirituality. If I do what He says, it is His business to elevate me.

Abhyasi: But once you said that if the person has not found the Master, the human being is allowed to pray for guidance.

PR: Yes, but that is for guidance. When I want a guru I pray, and the guru comes. Yes, but then after that it is your job. Like an unmarried man prays for a wife. But when the wife comes, he cannot pray and say, "Let my marriage be successful." **You** have to make it successful. Otherwise you want a wife and God coming with her and looking after the both of you. As I told you, God gives seeds, not trees. You have to plant, water, nourish and make them grow. A relationship is like that. We cannot expect a ready-made successful marriage. I mean, we are not selling shirts or pants here. Marriage has to be worked at. It is a continuous affair, a continuous *affaire de coeur* [affair of the heart].

Abhyasi: As an abhyasi, I would like to assume a lot of responsibilities, not just be a good disciple of the Master but also help Him in His responsibilities...

PR: Absolutely. When Babuji asked me what I wanted — it was in Germany. This was during the second visit. There one morning, I was preparing the *hookah* and suddenly he called me and said, "I am so pleased with you. Ask for anything and I will give." I said, "I want to go before you, so that there I shall await you with a car, ready with the door open." He was angry. He said, "Don't be silly. Young people cannot go before older people. That is not the law. And it cannot be asked for." So I said, "You are like all other gurus. A fraud. They say, 'Ask for anything' and when you ask they say, 'Not this, but anything else.'" I told him openly. I said, "You are a fraud." Then he smiled.

"No, no, how can the son go before the father?" And then he asked me a second question. "If I have prepared you so much, do you think it is for yourself I have done this? For you? For you, I would have given liberation. That is enough. Isn't it? But to take you up to the Central Region and to make you like myself — why? So that you may do my work." It is like the pillars in the house for supporting the roof. "No, no, no. This is very heavy. Let me go." [Chuckles] I am sorry. Why do you think a pillar is there? To support something.

So you see, we **have** to accept. There is no way out. This is a prison of love where there are no walls, no doors, no gates, yet you cannot escape. See if you are in a real prison, we are always trying to escape. Here, how can you try to escape when there is nothing to escape from?

Gracias [Thank you].

V

Europe

August, 1994

WORK!

Augerans, France

9 August, 1994

Everybody has problems. And you are no exception, I am no exception. Life means solving problems and moving on. If we stop with our problems we are stuck, there is no solution to the problem. Our life also is not moving. Because to think that we are moving in our life but we are stuck with a problem is a fallacy. It is like a person who falls in a dike beside the road and he thinks he has a problem, but he is moving. It is not possible. So, life is a series of problems, like a road is a series of kilometres. Up to now I think it is very clear, but now comes the question, "What is the relevance of this to our work as a preceptor?" I believe that if we do our work as a preceptor faithfully, we will be able to overcome all problems.

So, it is a question of whether I surrender to problems or I surrender to my work. If I surrender to my problem, I am surrendering to my lower self. If I surrender to my work, I am surrendering to my higher Self. The merit, the benefit, of surrendering to the higher Self should be obvious. Because, after all, we are all not new to the spiritual field. But I am somewhat perturbed when I see preceptors still continuing to deal with their problems, stuck with their problems, which are only their own creation. Our human relationships, as you call them in Europe, are all **our** creations.

Our relationship with our work is blocked by such so-called relationship problems. In Europe it is common to think that unless you are happy in your family, you cannot work properly. We in the East think that unless we work properly we cannot be happy in the family. So, you see the way the thing is upside down.

Many of the Europeans now want to come and live in India, and I do not know why. Because most Europeans started with the idea that India is a dirty country, there is no time sense, people are not educated, standard of living is low, and so many other problems. But today I find more and more Europeans are wanting to come and settle in India, in Madras. But India has not changed, so what is it that attracts you to come to India? That same thing must attract you to do your work here.

You know, Babuji said it is no use running away to the Himalayas or to the forest. But you should bring the forest or the Himalayas into your home. Similarly, if you live your lives as preceptors correctly, with dedication to your work, faithful to the promise that you made when you accepted this work, be conscious of your responsibilities towards abhyasis, also understanding that some — what do you call it — sacrifices are always necessary, then you can bring India right here!

So you see, we are always trying to convince ourselves of various ridiculous things, and therefore we are always trying to escape from our work. One preceptor says, "Abhyasis don't come to me." Some preceptors say, "I have no time." Some preceptors blame their wife or husband because they are not able to give sittings. And of course there is always this problem of jealousy. Now you know this is, since Babuji's *mahasamadhi*, this is twelve years, and every year I find our list of members is falling instead of rising. I have written all that in this letter which has been circulated to all of you. But I want to caution you about one thing. You see, when we are not faithful to ourselves, we cannot be happy.

People ask me, "You are old, you are not very well in health. Why do you travel so much?" Because I have to be faithful to the work that I have undertaken. We cannot escape from it. And if you try to escape from it, you have got a bad conscience. And the situation becomes a cyclical one, you see. Bad conscience, less health — more bad conscience, worse health. And it goes on like that.

So, to be happy we must be faithful to ourselves, and it is my opinion, it is my finding, it is my conviction that we should never become preceptors, because then we are happy. But if you have become a preceptor, you have to be faithful to the work which you have undertaken. Otherwise you are never going to be happy. Because you know in your heart that inside you is the Ultimate Master, and to Him you are all answerable, accountable. The fellow outside, speaking to you, talking to you, is not important. It is the presence inside that makes you sleepless, because in your heart you know what you are doing and what you are not doing.

I think the situation in all the countries is the same. The problems *vis-a-vis* the preceptors in all the countries is the same: faithful, unfaithful. So, we have to make up our minds that in this spiritual work which we have voluntarily undertaken, it is not something I can lightly put aside. It can be put aside only at the cost of my peace of mind, and my health and my happiness. If today at my age I am able to travel, it is because I have a certain health which is not dependent on my physical self. Please believe it. I often joke that I live on my will power — but it is not a joke. It is reality. Because if I loosen my will, I shall be dead. I learnt this lesson from my Master who, till the last moments, was working. Even when he was in a coma he was working.

So, work has to become something automatic. It does not depend on whether we are awake or asleep, whether we are happy in our *couple* or not. Nothing matters. When we work properly, with our heart, dedication, with love for the Master, with that idea of service to our community, then you will find you are working even when you think you are not working. But now, even when you think you are working, really, you are not working. That is why we are not able to help more and more people in our countries. That is why people do not find happiness when they come to us. Because happiness does not depend on the state of your health, nor even on the quantum of your knowledge. Health can come only when there is a clear conscience, and when we have a clear conscience as a preceptor, that I am doing my best with all my heart, the body may have its problems but I am well. We will sleep peacefully. The problems between couples will take their proper place in the hierarchy of life situations.

Unfortunately, in Europe, in the Occidental countries, these human problems are given top priority, and therefore you are failures. It is not only a question of degree of failure. I feel sad that instead of talking of degree of success I have to talk about degree of failure. But when in France today we have one hundred and five preceptors, surely we should have at least four thousand abhyasis. It is not a question of numbers. It is a question of, like in a garage which repairs cars, is it repairing enough cars every day? It is a service organisation. We must think of this, you see.

How many of us give sittings? How many of us have refused to give sittings because we are preoccupied with ourselves? There are even preceptors who have left because they had a change in their *couple* life. I do not know what to make of the situation. It is a matter of concern to me, and it should be a matter of concern to all of you. In the future I will not be able to come every year to Europe, and I do not think it should be necessary — **if** all of you do your work with the idea of service in your hearts, with love for those whom you serve as abhyasis, and with a sense of dedication to the Master, whom you all call Master.

So, please re-examine each one, yourselves, and decide for yourself whether you are working or not. One sitting in a year does not make you a preceptor. Not even a hundred sittings in a year. Preceptors should be working twenty-four hours of the day, and that is possible only when work becomes an internal habit and not something we do consciously. So, I hope you will all rise to the need of the day. Because you all know that the future of humanity depends on their spiritual life, and in some minuscule way we also have a part to play in it.

Thank you.

SAMSKARAS AND BHOG

Dublin, Ireland

17 August, 1994

I thought I should elaborate on this morning's subject of *samskaras* and *bhog*. Whether you wish to think of a previous life, which automatically means a future life, or you wish to be very Christian and think only of this life. Either way, it doesn't matter. I suppose the original idea of samskaras came to the Hindu mind — you know they call it also 'karma' — by observing how children are born with different potentials under different circumstances in different environments.

One of the first questions my Master was asked when we came to Europe in 1972 is, "Why is God so unjust that He sends babies into this world, some very healthy, with silver spoons in their mouths, some golden spoons, some in beggar homes, some castaways found on church doorsteps, etc?" Now, that is a very limited way of expressing one's concern for these children, because it is very easy to put the blame on God and say, "God must be blind. God must be unjust. God must be cruel. Otherwise, how to explain a three year old baby who has diabetes, another has lung problems, one is robust, one is a prince, one is a pauper."

I think the basic surmise of the Hindu mind must have been that God cannot be cruel, God cannot be unjust, God cannot be a tyrant, you know, to send babies out like this into this world. Because it would be like a manufacturer receiving raw materials of different grades, and he is expected to produce a standard product. It just doesn't happen that way. Of course, even in your Western religions — Christianity, Judaism, you do believe that God is love. It is taken for granted. Then why this question that, "If God is love, why are these children so different?" Science comes in with one answer: genetics. But genetics does not make paupers or princes. Genetics only makes for human physical, mental, and other attributes. You cannot, for instance, create a king by selecting a pair of mates and saying, "This child will be a king." A king's child becomes a king. A lion's child is a lion. Heredity does not explain these things. So science fails.

So, we turn to this possibility that perhaps the contributory causes were in the past. And the proof of this is, that if you observe even a selected batch of children who are all from the same background, with similar potentials, like the branches of a tree, they diverge in different directions as they grow up. So, even a selected batch, a trial batch, shows that, however equal these children may have been when they were born, they cease to be equal very soon after.

That is why I said you may believe with the Hindus that it is the past life, or you may believe with yourselves as Christians, in this life, but there is a difference. And eventually, I suppose they came to the conclusion that, depending on how we react to our existence and to our environment, we create samskaras.

So, that is a simple answer to how samskaras came into being, because many people are upset. They say, "Oh, but I didn't do anything which created the samskara." Psychologists will tell you that if you have a dream, you must have done something to have that dream. You can't dream of something which you have not created, in some mysterious fashion, in your equipment inside yourself. There, too, it is fascinating to find that there was a fellow who called himself Carl Gustav Jung, who was able to go back and back into the past and, you know, refer to some sort of collective unconscious, as he called it, to explain, for instance, the commonality of nightmares.

When you come to the basic fact of nightmares during sleep (*cauchemar*), and suffering in the waking state, it seems inevitable that we go into the past. So, samskaras are defined as something we have created by forming impressions because of our thoughts and actions.

Babuji Maharaj has explained this beautifully when he says, "If you look at a rose there is no samskara, but if you attend to it with your mind and say, 'It's very beautiful,' the samskara begins." And if you go back again and again to smell it, admire it, hope you had it for yourself, the samskara becomes deeper and deeper. And someday, if such a person comes to the spiritual fold, in some sitting or the other he will see roses as an experience.

So, these spiritual experiences are nothing but recreations of the original impression or the object which created that impression, and it is a signal, an intimation, that what created the samskara has been cleaned off — the samskara has finished now. People who study geology, and especially palaeontology — fossils — will understand this. There must have been something to have a fossil there. You can't have a fossil from nothing. God does not create fossils. A body falls into the river or is buried in some slush or some slime, it is covered over, and over eons of time the body is going, leached out, but something is put in its place — sedimentary rock formations, perhaps, and millions of years later, when you dig into that strata you find these fossils.

It is a science. Going back into the past is veritably a science, and you cannot say that dinosaurs had a past, but human beings did not have a past, because human beings have also been found fossilised, for instance. You have them from the most ancient times, you know, what they call the Peking Man, perhaps, Cro-Magnon, to Neanderthal, and it would be a limitation of the intellect to think that they lived once, and that was all, they had nothing else to do, because then evolution becomes something which we cannot accept. What is it that evolves?

You know, these and similar thoughts made me come to the conclusion, some of which I have expressed in those lectures which form a book which is called *The Role of the Master in Human Evolution*. Some of these thoughts made me come to the conclusion that the soul cannot evolve, because the soul partakes of the essence of divinity itself. In India we believe that it is a spark of the Divine, and the spark is nothing more than the original, like sparks flying from the fire, for instance.

So, in our existence, if we are able to lead life without forming impressions, either of a positive nature or a negative nature — because in samskara there is no such thing as a good samskara and a bad samskara; it is possible to live without creating samskaras — but the fact that you have already come here into this human existence necessitates our accepting a conclusion that we have created this life for ourselves. The soul does not create a life. The soul is already there. To me, it is a perfectly clear and acceptable conclusion, as far as I am myself concerned. That the soul, in its infinite wisdom, in its onward path towards wherever it has to go, what we call the original home, in the interregnum between two lives, decides upon where and how it shall be incarnated again. That's why you use the word 're-incarnation', which is nothing very wonderful, nothing mystical about it. It only means to become embodied in the flesh again, from the *carne*. Carnal, *carne* — anything to do with the flesh is carnal. *Carne* in Italian means flesh, and incarnation means to be in the flesh.

In Sahaj Marg, we only think of the soul as eternal, and life as that soul being embodied in the flesh. We cannot say the soul is alive. Something which is eternal has neither life nor death. This is something which people don't try to understand. They don't think about it. The soul is eternal. Therefore it cannot be dead, it cannot be alive, it cannot be born, it cannot die. But in some mysterious manner, which Babuji called the separation from the original home, each soul created for itself an ego. And therefore began this enormous voyage out into the universe, where at some stage we can perhaps find this nostalgic longing to be back in our original home, and that signals or indicates the commencement of a possible return journey back to our original home.

It does not **promise** it, because many things we begin which we don't finish. People come for sittings but they don't continue. They expect to have fun during meditation – happiness, pleasures. But it is as silly as a person going to sleep saying, "I shall only dream of being a princess tonight." That is for children in those small stories we have of, I don't know, *Le Petit Prince*, and things like that – *Rin Tin Tin*. Others have to face the possibility that in their sleep, the dreams can come only in the way in which the dreams have been created by each one of us individually. To put it in a very crude way, a man who eats bad things is going to have diarrhoea. Somebody who eats some other sort of food is going to be constipated. We all know that the output depends on the input. We are, in a sense, a manufacturing unit which takes in impressions and converts them into thoughts and converts them into samskaras and suffers consequently. Or we take in inputs in physical and other forms and suffer physically.

The law says you can only suffer in the plane in which the activity has been undertaken. I hope you will appreciate this, that there are various dimensions to being. For instance, I cannot eat bread and think I am going to have noble thoughts in my mind. Bread doesn't produce noble thoughts; it only satisfies hunger. So, food cannot be related to my thinking process. But nevertheless, Babuji says that, depending on what you eat, you can create samskaras, because samskaras are created by my **attachment** to my food. "Aha, wonderful bread! Bread with raisins, bread with walnuts, bread with almonds." You know, all this paraphernalia of existence. And two, three days, if I go into this cafeteria and find this lovely Irish bread with the walnuts and raisins in it, I am going to miss it – if I attend to it. But if, like Babuji, I am eating in constant remembrance and I don't know what I have eaten, it has no effect on me except the physical effect of having eaten bread and walnuts and raisins.

So you see, food is not responsible, drink is not responsible, but it is always the **mind** which is responsible for the creation of samskaras. People often say, "I was tempted." It is a very common thing, an experience, that the same thing does not tempt everybody else. I mean, you see something in a shop which tempts you, but nobody else seems to be tempted by it. A man sees a beautiful girl outside, but ninety-nine people don't even twitch their eyelids, but one fellow is made crazy. Or per contra, because we are always speaking of the women as temptresses, why not say: a woman sees a man and she is tempted, but not the other girls around her.

So you see, temptation is not in the object which tempts us, but is in **us**, where something responds or resonates to something outside. It has always been a fascination for me to find or to observe how people fall again and again into love with the same type of girl or boy. They don't change. Third girlfriend — very similar to the first one or the second one. Fifth — same story, you see, because we have no choice. I can change the girl, but I cannot change the samskara which brings that particular girl into my life. So, it is one of those fantasies to think that just because I have changed my girlfriend, or the girl has changed a boyfriend, I am going to be happy and live ever after like a Prince Charming and Princess Charming in fairy tales. These things happen only in fairy stories.

Therefore the Hindu says, what your samskara has created for you, you cannot possibly avoid. Don't try changing your partner; your misery you cannot change. But then, unfortunately, we believe in the Tarot and other cards, and we think we can pick out a new card which will change our future, our destiny. It will never happen. It will never happen because of two reasons: One, I created my destiny myself. Two, God has no direct influence on my destiny. Please excuse my saying this. People may not accept it. It may go against their theological background, it may go against religion, etc. But if God had a part in it, we again come to the conclusion that God must be some sort of a blind, cruel blighter who discriminates between us — who creates white Europeans, black Africans, indigo brown Indians, yellow races in China.

So, God (again we come back to this vicious circle) is not responsible. **We** are responsible. Having been responsible for it, the Masters have always said, "Well, unmake your future. You have made it. Now unmake it." How? Well, every woman who has knitted a sweater knows that if the ball of wool falls on the ground and gets all tangled up, she has to untangle it. She may curse a bit, or quite a lot in the process, and put the cat out of the window, but it has to be untangled. It is as simple as that.

Now, assuming that these samskaras are formed by us in our past, whether in a distant past or a near past, we have to remove them in two ways, which François described this morning. One is by bhog, which is the **only** way to non-spiritual people. Bhog is nothing more than having to undergo the consequences of the samskaras which we have created ourselves. People, rather understandably, think that only suffering is samskara, pain is samskara. But please understand that such joys and pleasures as you have in your existence are also because of your samskara. So, if you want to give up the one, you have to give up the other, too. Again, François said this this morning, that they are two sides of a coin, and he is right. You cannot choose, you cannot plan for, you cannot create a life of **only** joy, and **only** pleasure. It's not possible. Because where one goes, the other goes with it. They are twins. It is like light and shadow. No light — no shadow. A lot of light — dark shadows.

So you see, we call this world the world of dualities, because in this world there are both, and you cannot choose between them. If you choose, what you have chosen may come, the other will follow immediately thereafter. A good drink and a hangover, for instance. A binge, not just a drink, a binge — pub crawling, and next day, as somebody said yesterday, you really crawl, but no more in pubs!

So, the sort of thing where we are able to equate action and consequence is limited to a certain time frame. But suppose something I did is going to have a consequence years later, or millennia later — we are not able to understand the cause and effect relationship. It is as clear as that. But according to Western logic, everything must have a cause. We are even looking for the cause of the universe. We are talking of the Big Bang, we are talking of the steady state theory of Fred Hoyle, continuous creation of matter, how a child comes into being, what are the mysteries of conception.

We are always delving into the causes of things, but we are not able to face this particular aspect of the cause and effect relationship, that anything which I perceive as an effect in myself must have had a cause in me. So, we look for something to blame outside ourselves. "It is God." He is easily accessible to all. We may not believe in Him, but He can always be available for us to blame. And the poor fellow is always there. The whole of humanity has spent most of its time in blaming God — even the devout Christians, even the most devout Catholics, because it is easy to blame somebody for what we have done. "Why did you go for a drink?" "Oh, what can I tell you? O'Reilly came and he invited me. We are good friends, and I couldn't say no to him. Poor O'Reilly!" "Why are you like this?" "Oh, because you know, I had a bad childhood. My mother and father never loved me. They destroyed my innocence. They destroyed my faith in myself." Yes, but who told you to be impressed, in the true sense, by what your parents did? Why don't you just say, "Dad and Mom, I am going to be something different." Nothing necessitated this being impressed in this way.

So, we are always blaming either the past or God — two things only we have to blame. And of course, friends, relatives, neighbours, etc. We must first of all give up this tendency to blame any source outside ourselves. The first step in spiritual progress will not come unless we accept responsibility — I don't say blame, I don't say credit, but responsibility — for everything that is happening to me — in me, and outside me. This sense of responsibility, it is absolutely inevitable that a spiritual aspirant develop, because without that sense of responsibility there is no progress in life. We call such people irresponsible. It is not only drunks who are irresponsible. It is not only gamblers who are irresponsible. It is people who will not understand that they are responsible for themselves — they, too, are responsible, and they are in the majority.

So, when I accept responsibility, now I say, "How can I change this?" Because if I have been responsible for what I am, by Jove, as certainly as the night is the night and the day is the day, I **shall** be and can be responsible for what I am going to be, too. Step number two in spirituality: I can make my future. There is no karma which binds me to a future. It might have bound me till now, but my future is in my hands. I don't need to pray to God for it. I don't need to pray to anybody else for it. I need only to pray to myself: "For heaven's sake, wake up. Get going. Get on with this job of creating yourself in the way that you want to be, in the way that you are destined to be, for which you were created originally by the Creator."

So you see, spirituality necessitates acceptance and responsibility for what you are, and thereby guarantees to you the possibility of becoming what you wish to become. Because, if you are not responsible for your present and for your past, you cannot be responsible for your future, too. I cannot see the possibility of partitioning responsibility into historical periods of the past, the present, and the future. Either I am totally responsible for everything, or I am totally irresponsible or not responsible. And then comes this, what shall I say, rather chaotic mental condition, that I am between the Devil and the deep sea, between hope and despair, between possibility and impossibility, between the dark night of the soul and the beautiful transcendental luminosity of innocence.

So you see, you never have a future for which you can take responsibility unless you have a past for which you are responsible, and you accept that responsibility. So, the samskara theory is something very beautiful, you see. It says, "Be responsible. Whatever you have been, was because you were whatever you were. Now you want to be something? It is possible." Because the very samskaras which have created you and brought you here to what you are today can be changed, I repeat, in two ways: *bhoga*, which is universal, applies to everybody, and will only govern our lives unless we take to a spiritual practice; and, fortunately, the aspect of cleaning in Sahaj Marg, where, without bhoga, the samskaras are removed.

I think I won't be far out if I say that this business of cleaning of samskaras is perhaps unique to the Sahaj Marg system. I may not have a merciful God, but I have a merciful Master who has evolved a technique of cleaning, which says that in one session of cleaning, the samskaras of many hundreds of lives can be removed — **can** be removed. Whether it is removed or not depends on you.

So, like samskaras, which are neither good nor bad, habits are also there, which are neither good nor bad. I have a feeling that a good habit is as bad as a bad habit because it is enslaving you into a pattern of existence which need not be. "I must have coffee in the morning." Well, I like this Lavazza — beautiful Italian coffee packed in a black carton with gold lettering, and the coffee inside is superb. It is one case where all that glitters **is** gold, unlike the chocolates that the Swiss market in the shape of coins and biscuits of gold, which only contain chocolate inside.

So, what is good, what is bad? Your Shakespeare from your Western culture said, "Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so." *Voila!* If I think that something is bad, it stinks for me. If I think it is good, fish and chips! It is a good habit, you see, in the Western world, especially in this part of the country. Fish and chips is something of a staple diet. But for me, when I pass the environs of such a shop [sniffing the air], I curse myself for being where I am!

So, what is good, what is bad? Vegetables are good. It is fashionable to say, "Yes." In France, they eat the salad first and then everything else because, as Madeleine Badach, my healer, always says, "*Cru* must be eaten first — raw — and the cooked later." But here they eat the cooked food first and the salad later. So, what should we follow? Which rules should we respect? What should be our attitude to these conglomerates of dieting habits, toilet habits, so many habits which you have formed?

So, there are no good habits, bad habits. There are no good manners, bad manners. There are only effective habits, effective manners. If I want to do something with somebody, I must have manners effective to that situation — relevant. In a spiritual life, relevance is extraordinarily necessary, extraordinarily important. Am I doing what is relevant to the moulding of my future? People often ask, "Well, Chari, you know, if I do this, what's wrong? A little drink? Surely it's not going to pollute my soul. You have yourself said that the soul has no capacity of being polluted or ennobled. It is as it is, as it was, and as it shall ever be." Yes, but this human life is given to us precisely to liberate that poor thing which, by whatever you may call it, has become enshrined in the carnal world, in a carnal body, with carnal appetites.

So, bhog is the process of undergoing the effect of these samskaras. But unfortunately, because we carry the burden of such enormous bhog, one life is not enough. That is why cleaning, as an effective technique of removing samskaras, is such a blessing to us. Some people ask me, "If Babuji is so merciful, why does he permit any bhog at all?" Because some bhog is necessary to put some sense into this solid nonsense here, which we call a head, and inside which I firmly believe there is a brain.

Some bhog is necessary to teach us how to behave, how not to behave. In the case of a man who loses the very first time he bets on a horse, he may never go back to racing again. You know, they always say, "Gamblers luck — first time, you win," so that lady of gambling can tempt you again and again. "Oh, I won the first time; I am going to win the second time. Double my bet."

So, success is a lure. It is like the fly you throw into the river to catch a trout or a salmon — excuse me, I'm not a fisherman, but having read something about some type of fly, you know, I believe they have different flies to catch different fish. They are caught. The fish thinks it is going to have a happy time with this fly floating just above it on the glittering surface of the river, and the fisherman knows he is going to eat it.

So, these luring things, you see, alluring things — they are baits. Babuji said, "Avoid anything that creates an impression." There is nothing wrong in the universe, there is nothing wrong in nature — not even fish. Not even women — they are all good, very lovable, cuddly, soft, gentle. Occasionally the opposite! But it depends on you what it or she or he is going to be. It depends **only** on you. Here again comes the need to be able to accept responsibility even in a relationship. Because unless I am what I wish to be — peaceful, happily married, leading a blissful life — I cannot do it. I have to want it first, I have to change myself first. Then the possibility exists that what I see in the mirror will also be change. Otherwise we will be like this stupid queen, you know, who was asking every morning, "Who is the fairest of them all?" I mean, a fair woman doesn't need confirmation from her mirror every morning. She is beautiful, she knows it, and you don't need a silly mirror to tell that to you. A strong man doesn't have to go around beating people to prove to himself that he is strong. These are signs of insecurity.

Every one of us knows in our hearts that we are not what we pretend to be. And this pretension is called personality. "Oh, he has a personality. He has a presence." Yes, but what is he inside? What is he behind that mask behind which he is hiding? A seething mass of samskaras trying to burst out, which, in most societies which are called primitive, **do** burst out, and the bhog is finished.

But in polite societies they are hidden under a cloak of civilisation, culture, good behaviour, etiquette, etc. You would like to scream and squeeze somebody's neck, but you have to shake hands and say politely, "Good evening. Welcome!" Now, this is deepening the samskaras. I am not suggesting that we should squeeze each other's neck — not at all. But we pay a heavy price for civilisation.

It is not irrelevant to this discussion to look at the way primitive peoples are happy under all circumstances, whereas civilised humans are happy under only certain selected circumstances. "The chicken is good, but the plate is dirty," and the man cannot eat. He suffers. "Oh," he says, "I suffer, Chari, because you know I like my cutlery and my crockery to be spic and span." "But what about the chicken on it?" "Oh, no, but you see, in India you will do it, but here we like, you know, this plate that I have got here is, what is that, Jensen in Denmark? Jensen's pottery, Jensen's plates, at two hundred and fifty dollars each." But does it change the taste of the food that I am eating? Unless I am so stupid that I think the plate has a taste of its own.

So you see, civilisation perhaps makes us create more and more samskaras by negating our inner self and by creating an artificial self which we call a personality, in the hope of succeeding in interpersonal relationships in one's corporate life, and even in one's spiritual life. Because people behave, even with the so-called Master, from behind a mask. Why are some afraid of the Master? It is not only guilt. It is this idea that, "I am not what I assume myself to be, or what I want to show myself to be. And that blighter knows! Look at that piercing glance he is throwing in my direction." One lady has been blaming me for the last two days, saying that, "You looked at me in such a piercing way that in the last two nights I haven't been able to sleep," etc. Just a glance of love, you see. If you don't look they are unhappy. "Oh, he never looked at me. He did not like me. He doesn't love me. He didn't even look in my direction!" North, south, east, or west — I suppose in the future we'll have to carry a compass and make sure that we have gone round the whole circle!

You see how ridiculous it is that, even before the Master, the Irish behave very Irishly, the British behave very Britishly, of course, and the Indian very Indianly, the females very femininely — fluttering their eyelashes even at a Master, hoping that in some way they can attract him. I mean, it's not rare that a woman does this. Again I repeat, it is because we are what we are and we cannot help being what we are, until we change ourselves into what we want to be. So, the flutterer of eyelashes continues to flutter her eyelashes, the winker continues to wink, the curser continues to curse — I don't mean the cursor on the computer screen, but one who curses all the time. He says, "That blasted blighter. That stupid Indian. He doesn't understand Gaelic. He doesn't even speak good English. It's Indian-English." As if English-English exists. I haven't seen English-English even in England, except perhaps the queen, because it's supposed to be the queen's English or the king's English, and what they speak, nobody understands!

So you see, this idea of samskara is a very pleasant subject. Because, I repeat, if I am what I am because of what I thought and what I did, I am a free person. I am not bound by any theology which says God created and Adam fell, and the fall was the original sin, etc, which are convenient means of blaming God and escaping our own responsibility. That is easy. Churches have made money through the millennia by putting guilt on us, by blaming us, and saying, "Well, if you put your shilling or a pound on the plate, I will pray for you." Nobody else can pray for you, at least not the pastors in the churches, not the priests. Only love can produce a prayer which can be effective. And if you want to pray for someone, make sure it is a **loved** one, meaning that you love him or her enough to pray for her in a systematic, in a sincere, in a real way with feeling of the heart. Prayer doesn't mean, you know, genuflection before the cross and an offering made big enough to satisfy the whims of the God before you for the moment.

Where there is no love to back prayer, that prayer is useless. You might as well address the postcard to God, Heaven, Above Ireland, 17,000 Feet, and post it. It won't reach. "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below; words without thoughts, never to Heaven go." It's an old, old, old thing which we were taught in church. You know, I belong to the Protestant church. When I say, "I belong," I don't really belong, but I was educated under the Protestant system.

If I can change myself, what external source do I need? I have to accept responsibility, which is coming from within me. I have to do the cleaning, which I do myself. And I have to have the bhoga of such samskaras that are necessary for forming my character, which is again my activity. So, who else do I need? Perhaps one or two of you may say, "The Master." Yes. What for? To guide you. To help you. Therefore Babuji said, 'spiritual guide'. 'Master' is a term which is rather unnecessary, because it immediately creates the idea that one is a master, the other is a slave. You know, we are always thinking in terms of opposites. If I am not rich, I must be poor. I may be neither. If I am not healthy, I must be sick. Nonsense! I can be in an in-between state where I am neither healthy nor sick, and enjoying it very much. Food may not be tasty, but it may not be unpalatable, too. It is just simple.

We have forgotten that there is a *via media* between two extreme opposites, and we are swinging between the opposites, never touching the middle path, the middle position. One who is not beautiful is not necessarily ugly. Isn't it? One who is not white certainly need not be black. One who is not God, need not be the Devil. In between, we are there — the humans — sometimes divine, sometimes devilish.

So you see, this spirituality, especially Sahaj Marg, is absolute proof that my destiny can be moulded by myself. And if anybody asks, "What is the proof, Chari?", it is my samskara, because what I created, I can destroy. So Babuji says, "Destroy your creation and His creation comes into being." What is my creation? All the false values which I have assimilated into myself, for myself, by myself. Ideas of civilisation, ideas of propriety, ideas of male and female, ideas of God and the Devil and the human being — everything has to go.

Therefore Babuji Maharaj said, "Where religion ends spirituality begins," because they are in different dimensions. It does not mean negating religion. Religion has a place in the lives of people who are not able to transcend religion. For them, the church is a very necessary place. Like for the sick, a hospital is necessary. But everybody is not sick, so why should I be in a hospital unless I am sick? And why should I be in a church or a temple or anything like that unless I need a God whom I have never seen, whom I shall never know, and in whom I have no faith? They are institutions, and institutions benefit only those who can benefit from such institutions.

A boy who goes to school and does not study will not pass. It is not the school which makes him pass. It is his study which makes him pass the examination. Every patient in a hospital doesn't come out walking on his two legs. Some are carried away to be buried. You have to co-operate. Here, too, we have to co-operate. In what way? Accepting the teaching, accepting responsibility for evolution, stopping blaming the Master or God or your parents. No guilt, because what I did, I did — the past cannot be changed; it is irremediable. But, from now on my future is definitely in my two hands, and neither the god nor the devil have a part to play in it. They are playing their part in some cosmic functions.

So, to me, the existence of samskaras, which I have not seen before, which Babuji Maharaj taught me about, was a fascinating promise of my future. Because without samskaras, had I been living, I would have had no future, I would have no personal part to play in moulding my future. Even my Master could not have created anything in me. So, samskaras are wonderful things. They reveal to me. They speak to me and say, "Well, you did this and this; therefore you are suffering. Now undo it. Change yourself. You ate chocolate and had a migraine? Stop eating chocolates."

We should not be worried about samskaras. It is the only proof to me that I am a responsible person who, having behaved perhaps irresponsibly in the past, can nevertheless behave with responsibility in the future and reap the benefits of a life responsibly lead, towards a future that can be had only by a responsible person who takes responsibility for himself or herself, in the real sense of doing what is necessary and avoiding what is not, doing what is effective and throwing away everything else. There is no place for emotions, false faiths, affiliations, because they are all confining things. The Catholic is no more than a Catholic — merely a Catholic. A Christian is no more than a Christian — just a Christian, a mere Christian. So also a Buddhist, a Hindu, and all these people.

Why should I be confined within the four walls of a church or between the pages of dogma and ritual, which I don't understand, in which I have no faith, but yet out of fear, I do. Yet, negating that fear by saying, "God is love." We are a living lie, every one of us, when we say, "God is love," and we go and pray to Him and say, "God forgive me." God does not forgive. We have to forgive ourselves. In what sense? As Babuji said, "The true repentance is the challenge of not doing the same thing again." That is true repentance, not, you know, the beads and the hundred miserere, or whatever it is. That is a false thing, because there you are thinking of it all the time and the samskara is becoming deeper and deeper. Here, we forget the past, give our past into the Master's hands, because he helps us to remove the samskaras. He does most of the work. He is the Blessed to whom we should be grateful.

So, the past is what we surrender to him. "The future," he says, "create yourself. I am there to help you.

I am there to take you by the hand to your goal. I am always with you. You don't need to pray to me, you don't need to bow before me, you don't have to give me anything. But please give me your past."

I hope something is clearer now. If necessary, we shall speak about this again.

Thank you.

MASTERY OF SELF

West Linton, Scotland

23 August, 1994

I have been told there are a lot of new abhyasis, so maybe I should start right from the beginning, all over, because I find even established abhyasis have misunderstandings about many things. Yoga means to be united with something — union, and when we speak of yoga in this context, we mean yoga with the Infinite, Ultimate, Divine, whatever you choose to call it. Other forms of yoga are not included in this definition in Sahaj Marg. In Sahaj Marg, yoga means union with the Ultimate; all lesser unions do not belong under that category. That is number one.

Then secondly, we have to understand what religion is, because many people say, "I am a Christian," or "I am a Buddhist," or "I am a Hindu." "Why should I meditate?" Religion does not teach meditation. Religion only teaches us to pray, to worship, and to try to approach a god external to ourselves. Religion is **man's** creation. There is no such thing as a divine religion. Religions are very much human, like newspapers, like pubs, like trains, like so many other things. The only thing is, they pretend that there are people in religion who can give us access to the god they worship but, by and large, that has not happened throughout the history of human beings.

Such as have been fortunate enough to emancipate themselves from this human existence have always been people who have gone beyond religion, meditated, and found God within themselves. There is no exception to this. I repeat, there is no exception to this.

Now comes the role of spirituality. Religion having failed, perhaps religion was never intended to be a medium of liberation from this mundane, worldly existence. And, as Babuji Maharaj said over and over again, religion is only the kindergarten or school where we are taught to have some idea of ethics, some idea of morality, some idea of something vaguely called God. Each religion tries to prove that its god is the only God, and therefore religions have always divided people.

It has been said again and again that more people have died because of religion than in all the wars, and that's not a very good certificate for religion. Religions divide, as Babuji Maharaj said, and until we can forget that there is a Christian god and a Hindu god and a Buddhist god, or a Buddhist no-god, we are going to be separated by the very thing which would have united us in our purpose to achieve a common goal. So, the second truth is that religions divide and have been dividing us all our lives and, perhaps, will continue to do so for the rest of the foreseeable human future, unless we take steps to see that that does not happen. Therefore Babuji said, "Where religion ends, spirituality begins."

Here I must use a little caution in explaining to you what exactly Babuji meant when he said, "Where religion ends...", because people say, "Oh, you want to destroy Christianity, you want to destroy Hinduism." We are not out to destroy anything. We are not here to destroy established religion. It is not part of our purpose, it is not in our plan, and it is beyond our capacity, too. But it is certainly our purpose to try and make individuals go beyond their religion, whatever it may be. Like a child is born out of its mother; it cannot remain in its mother and have a separate existence.

So, religion can be considered in one way as the womb of spirituality. We need religion like we need kindergarten schools, but we must not stay in them, and we must certainly not die in them. A child which dies in kindergarten remains a child, dies as a child. And it is no use quoting the scripture and saying, "Be ye as little children." Christ did not say, "Be ye little children." He said, "Be ye **as** little children." So, we have to try to be as little children, and evolve out of the kindergarten school to the various levels of scholastic abilities, institutions, education, and eventually graduate out of such institutions.

Institutions are there merely to take us through them from the beginning to the end, and finally to liberate us in the human existence with whatever they have given us, with whatever we have been able to absorb from those institutions. Scholastic institutions give us knowledge, as they say, which is only knowledge of facts: the earth has a circumference of, I think, twenty-three thousand miles; the sun rises in the east and sets in the west; the north pole is at the south, and the south pole is at the north, which is a very funny thing to say, though it is true; latitudes and longitudes are there because people had to navigate — there is no such thing on earth, really — and so on and so forth. Physics, chemistry, botany — all knowledge of the material world.

So you see, in all these fields of education, we really deal with knowledge of the material world. But God does not belong to the material category. Material in the sense of something which can be handled by us physically — sensory things like that. We need a different science, or a different art, if you like, or a combination of both before we can transcend both scholastic institutions and so-called religious institutions into a single institution which we call a spiritual institution. It is a combination precisely because there you have available to you experience of something transcendental, knowledge perhaps of something transcendental, and approach to grow into something transcendental.

Spirituality is essentially a science of the transcendental, an art of the transcendental — how to seek, how to find — never how to get. Because many people come to spirituality wanting to **get** something, probably friendship, love philtres — not f-i-l-t-e-r-s, which would be more appropriate — but p-h-i-l-t-r-e-s and so many other things, you see: freedom from disease, freedom from penury, and so on and so forth. Spirituality does not even mention these things. We, because of our religious background, accustomed to going on our knees before an unseen, unknown, unknowable God, always praying and begging, translate such needs into the field of spirituality and think here also we can go on our knees and beg. And I hope they don't borrow and steal!

Spirituality is a totally different thing. It has nothing to do with schooling and education; it has nothing to do with religion and its education. One gives the kindergarten experience of the material world, the other gives the kindergarten approach to what we call divinity, but eventually we have to graduate both out of the scholastic limitations, which keep us limited to the material world, material knowledge, knowledge of the material world, and go beyond our churches, our temples, or whatever we have, into that transcendental field where both culminate in an existence where, as we say in the ancient Hindu philosophy, you find existence, consciousness, bliss, all coming together in one grand synthesis. It does not mean, "I exist, I am conscious and I enjoy bliss." It is not like that. It is that existence **is** consciousness, and being existent and conscious is itself a state of bliss. I have to give you this caution because people say, "Well, I have been in Sahaj Marg for twenty years and I have never experienced bliss." Whereas in the material world, we do have bliss of sorts, occasionally, which we mistake for the transcendental bliss.

In spirituality we aim at a state of being, at a level of being, where we are existing consciously in bliss. It is not that I am existing and bliss has to come to me from somewhere and that I have to be conscious and unconscious alternatingly or something like that, but it is a simultaneous manifestation of all three facets: existence, consciousness, bliss. And why did they say this? Because existence does not mean consciousness. Our people were bold enough to say that you are walking around like puppets, wound up like toys, moving and playing and thinking you are alive. It was a fantasy. It was a fallacy. We were not really conscious.

It holds today also. Even today we are being pushed in our respective direction or directions by samskaras. We have no choice. We are leading lives of compulsion. We are pushed hither and thither, pulled up and down, by forces which we do not know, which we cannot handle, which we are powerless to deal with, and which we have never been taught how to eradicate.

So, our lives are lives of automatons — robotic lives. We think we are doing and we are learning and we are achieving. Anyone who thinks like that, whether he's a professor or a fool, is a fool because you are only pushed from inside, you have no choice. It is quite transparently visible to one who will accept it and try to find within himself the barriers to his own self-knowledge, firstly of the fact that, "Yes, I am a robot. I am mechanically driven. I am not really alive. I am compelled by forces within me to act, to respond, to be in certain ways." One who does not have the capacity or lacks the courage to face this fact will not be able to progress in spirituality.

It is like that famous story, I think Pinocchio, where a wooden doll becomes a human being. We are all Pinocchios, something which is hanging down like a puppet and the puppeteer is making us move and play and what all. Until we realise this, we are not really ready to enter the spiritual life. Because we still think, "I am intelligent," "I am a professor," or, "I am a chief executive at a big multinational company," or, "I am this or that," or whatever it is that panders and pampers to our ego and inflates it more and more, and gives us feelings of success, failure, betrayal, love, trust — all empty words without any real feeling backing them.

Today, we don't love human beings. We are incapable of loving each other. We are driven by forces, we are driven by passions, and it is clear that it is not love, because love does not drive — love attracts. It is passion which drives you towards something, towards conquest, whether it is of people, whether it is of places, whether it is of things. It is what you call, you know, in

our company language, ambition, aggressive ambition, which drives us again towards something. And when we are driven like that, we don't think about who is on the way, who is in our way. I have to move forward because I am driven by forces: push, trample over, if necessary, kill.

This is what is happening today, and I don't think anybody can deny this. There may be individual exceptions, but as a general phenomenon, this is what is going on. Individual greed, multiplied by the nationals of the country becomes national greed. A group of countries get together all driven by similar greed, it becomes a union of greed. Power trying to flaunt itself over the weak, dominate the weak, rule the weak. The only change some culture has brought into us is that we pretend it is for helping the poor not to be aggressive, not to fight with each other, not to quarrel, not to have territorial ambitions, and not to flaunt power. So, the powerful today are able to hide their powerful aggressiveness under a cloak of doing good. "No, no, they cannot govern themselves, you see, so we have to govern them — poor people."

When I was in South Africa last year before the elections, many people asked me, "Who would you vote for?" I was very clear in my choice. But they said, "Wouldn't you be supporting a party which cannot rule itself?" I said it does not matter; they have to learn to rule themselves. You know, when you train your children, you don't spoon-feed a child of twelve. It's all right to breastfeed a baby, but you don't breastfeed a boy of six, under the cloak of love, maternal love. "No, no. I love my son too much, you see."

So, we have to let people grow by asking them to grow by themselves, but only being there to help them in moments of possible fall and danger, etc. In spirituality, there is no compulsive force. We cannot compel people to meditate, we cannot compel people to do the cleaning, we cannot compel people to even come here, because in spirituality no force can be used. If God is love, his devotee must be a lover, a beloved. And out of love we must come to spirituality, not out of hatred for another religion, not out of fear of God, not out of the insupportable, insurmountable weaknesses in us, not because of the things we lack, not because of the food we need or the health we need or the happiness we need. None of these things are applicable.

One who is not in spirituality because he loves God, again has no real place in spirituality, though, as Babuji said, "If such people come to me, I throw them some crumbs as an act of charity — no more." So you see, spirituality is very different from perhaps what you have been thinking so far, and you will come to understand spirituality only when you have come at least to a certain level in your practice where you are able to sit and meditate — not because you **must** meditate, but because you cannot live without meditating. Where you love God not because you **must** love God, because he has to give you something or you have to get something, but because in loving God, you are only loving yourself. Where you do the cleaning not because you must do it or you are dirty or filthy or you stink, but because you cannot exist with yourself in that state. As Babuji said, if there is a boil on the finger and it is paining, it has to be pricked and the pus removed. Or you can keep it — and suffer.

So you see, there is no 'must' in spirituality, there is no 'thou shalt', there are no rules, there are no obligations. Why are there no fees in Sahaj Marg? Because the Master would not like to be obliged to people who have no sense of their own personal inner value, the value of their inner strength, their inner capacities, their inner divinity. The moment you take a fee, you are obligated to serve. We don't want to be obligated to serve anybody who will not serve himself. God helps those who help themselves. Here, too, it is a fact.

The moment we touch a fee, you see, two hundred rupees for a sitting, five thousand to be put into the cosmic region, twenty thousand in the central region, it would be a sham, it would be a lie. Because, your Master may be capable of doing it, but are you capable of rising to that occasion out of love for those states of being, out of an inner longing to be in that condition? Or, are you just aping people who have achieved something in life and saying, "I want to be like him." Do you know what it means to say, "I want to be like my Master"? Have any of you understood this? Have any of you wondered **what** he is? Have any of you even thought about **how** he is? Have you been able to penetrate his outer softness, his ever-smiling, cheerful nature, his all-loving, compassionate friendship? Have you ever been able to go beyond this to see what he is really inside? Only such a one has a right to say, "I want to be like him," because if, having seen the inner self of the Master, you still want to be like him, then you are already on the first step of saintliness.

But we are just mouthing empty words: "Oh, I want to be like the Master. I yearn to be like the Master. I long to be like the Master." In what way? Are you willing to suffer what he is suffering? You have one child, or two, and you suffer so much. If the child does not behave properly, you suffer. If he goes wrong, you suffer enormously. If he becomes a drug addict, a womaniser, your suffering has no limits. And that poor old man, you know, with fifty thousand children of his, known children, and all the people of this Earth, about whom you don't know, who are the unknown children, are you able to support one second of his existence in the condition in which he is? So, don't aspire to these things because they're horrible things, nightmarish things, and if you want to be like him, you have to develop the strength, the Divinity that is in him. Without it, his life is not capable of being supported even by him.

That is why Babuji said, "If for one second I lose the thought of Lalaji, my life will be over." He was not sustaining himself. He did not rely on his own inner strength. He relied on his Master. For him, his Master was all. For him, the Master was his support, the Master was his inner self, and the Master was his God. In short, everything. Until we become capable of feeling these things instead of just talking about them, what is the use of talking about them? What is the use of saying, "I want to be like him," of praising him? Again we are falling in the ways of religion, "You are great, you are holy, you are transcendental, you gave your life so that generations of people after you may be blessed, etc, etc." False mouthings, false glorification, false deification.

So you see, in our spiritual lives, we should not transpose these lies of religion into it, that God is great. Sahaj Marg says God is not great, because if He is great, there could be something greater. God is kind. Sahaj Marg says "No, God is neither kind nor cruel; He is what He is. **You** are kind or cruel; God cannot be the subject of dualities. He cannot love one and hate another. He cannot love the saint and hate the sinner. On the contrary, in every religious tradition, you find He has loved the sinner more than the saint. Why? Precisely because the sinner **needs** love. It's like a sick man needs a doctor. What does a healthy man need a doctor for?

So you see, we have these funny things, and the problem is that we try to bring, for instance, marital bliss into spiritual bliss. What is it like, this spiritual bliss? You cannot describe. The bliss of human union, yes, you can describe — therefore it is limited. Anything you can describe is limited. How much do you love? "Oh, like my father loves my mother." Limited. First of all, the child cannot know whether the father loves the mother or not. Because in general in society, we are all playing various roles. Outside, we pretend to love everybody, inside we are seething with hatred, with anger, with frustration, with denial. Who is there who is bold enough to be outside as he is inside? It is possible only when our outside and inside are both the same. Integration means that the inside and the outside are identical, there is no difference. Such a person has to play no roles, has to fool nobody, not even himself, has to satisfy nobody, not even himself, has to worship nothing, not even himself.

We are all playing roles. Remember what Shakespeare said: "All the men and women are merely players." It is true. It has always been true. Why? Because we know what we are inside. Babuji said, "Self-knowledge is useless." He was laughing at the Delphic oracle and its statement, "Know thyself." He said, "Which fool exists who does know himself or herself?" They are **afraid** of showing what they know of themselves. They don't have the courage to face themselves. They cannot exhibit what they are inside. There are no exceptions. Perhaps a few in the whole of history.

So, when I cannot face myself, how can I face anything else? That is why we are so cowardly, you see, and we have to play roles, pretend to be strong, pretend to be big, pretend to be powerful, throw atom bombs at each other. A strong man doesn't need an atom bomb. When Babuji said that by a single thought he could neutralise all the bombs in this world, atomic, fission, anything you like, it was not a boast. After all, everything is created by the power of thought, even atom bombs. And do you think the power of thought cannot dismantle it?

So you see, such people are extremely rare, as Babuji said, once in tens of thousands of years, perhaps. And having found such a one, not to learn from him, not to follow his teaching, calling him a Master, and not obeying him, calling him a Master, and not following him, what is the use of saying we are abhyasis of Sahaj Marg?

Sahaj Marg abhyas means a very serious commitment, and don't be afraid — it is not to the Master, it is to your own Self. I am here because I want to develop into something that I can look at without having to cringe with shame and fear. How many of us can look in the mirror and see ourselves as something we can love? How many? We may love our faces, we may love the lipstick, we may love our moustaches, but how many of us can really love what we see there? I am here in this, let us say, game of Sahaj Marg to develop into something which will no longer be afraid of itself. And not being afraid of itself, it cannot be afraid of anything in the universe. Fearlessness comes only to him who can fearlessly face himself.

True knowledge is the possession of only that person who has true knowledge of himself, in the sense of having known the Self within, not himself in the conventional sense of the Delphic oracle, "Know thyself." No. In the spiritual sense of having known, or rather experienced, the presence of the true Self in me, which is my, what shall I say, prime mover, as we say in engineering. It is he who makes me active, who gives life to me. Either we are run by our samskaras, compelled to think and to act and to suffer or enjoy in a pre-programmed way, or we can become capable of leading a life in which my inner self now guides my existence. One pushes me, compels me; one lovingly guides me. The choice is yours to make, but it has to be a choice not of whims and fancies — not like trying in a buffet dinner where there are sixty-three items, you go along tasting a bit of each and putting them on your plate, not like that — it has to be a permanent commitment because, after all, the Self in you is permanent in the sense that it is eternal, it is indestructible, it was never born, it shall never die.

This is unfortunate, too, because it gives us a sense or a feeling that we have eternity before us. What is the hurry? If, as you say, the inner Self is always within you, dormant or active, it doesn't matter, why don't I enjoy this life and come back to spirituality when I have, sort of, finished sowing my wild oats, as the British so beautifully say? Wild oats, not carefully thought-out oats, not planned oats, not agriculture — it is a scattering of the seed.

So you see, until we are mature enough to know that the Fellow who is asleep inside me doesn't care a damn about me — He is asleep, He is in bliss, He is in that state of existence-consciousness-bliss conjoined into one state. For Him it matters not. You know, like the life in the seed doesn't care about the seed. It is there, the seed is there. Someday it will germinate, given the proper circumstances. But if you want to have that today, you must sow the seed today, water it today, make it germinate, plant it, transplant it, make it grow, yield its fruit. "Yes, but you know, Chari, you yourself told me in Augerans three years back that the grain found in Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt, three thousand years old, has still matured and germinated." Yes! Life's capacity cannot be dimmed, but will **I** live long enough to know that my life is eternal? Will I live long enough to know that He who sleeps within me is an aspect of Divinity itself? If not, I am going to die ignorant while He continues to sleep in his existence-consciousness-bliss state. For Him, I am neither alive nor dead, I am only a vehicle. Therefore the need, if you believe in it, for transmigration, to be born again — not because the life needs it, but because the seed needs it.

So you see, it is a very peculiar state of affairs, rather difficult to understand, that while the Self in me is eternal, for God knows what reason, nevertheless it is a proof to me that God has no mind, because had He a mind, He would never have imprisoned Himself into our stupid hearts. It is a direct proof that He has no mind. It is a direct proof that He is everywhere because, were He not everywhere, He would be only in some hearts and not in others. It is a proof of His, shall we say, infinity, of His immortality, because He is everywhere at all times, and we stupid people are the proof of that — we prove to the rest of the world that if such and such a criminal can have God in him, God must be eternal, God can have no choice, God can have no particular choice of residence, He has to be everywhere at all times. Otherwise, He does not fulfil the definition of God, therefore He is not God any more. That is his characteristic, his eternality, his omnipresence. He is proved by this fact that saint or prostitute, criminal or wise man, He is in every heart.

This is the proof of Divinity. Were He but present in a few hearts, not at all. It is like money in the pocket of the rich and not in the pockets of the poor. What more proof do you need that He is there, right in your heart, and it is to Him that you have to appeal for such aid as you need, such assistance as you seek, for such immortality as you yearn for, for the liberation that you must have and for all the things that you must avoid if you are to have these things.

There is no external compulsion. God says, "Well, this universe is there. If you are going to follow a life of pleasure/pain, light/darkness, health/sickness, joy/no joy, go ahead. For me, it makes no difference because I am all there was, I am all there is, I am all that shall ever be. But to you it makes a very definite difference. Being within you, yet I don't suffer what you suffer. Being within you, I don't enjoy what you enjoy. Being within you, I live a life which is not your life — yet. Being within you, you die; I never die." So, He says from inside, "My friend" — look at His magnanimity — He says, "My friend! You who call yourself my beloved, wake up! Restore our lost relationship." To one of what? Love. And then when you have something in yourself to love, you don't have to run around seeking love outside your life, which is what you are doing today, you know — butterfly existence, flitting from flower to flower, from mate to mate, from bed to bed.

Only yesterday, somebody told me a very wise thing. He said, "Today people don't understand the difference between sensuality and sexuality." Life is sensual because we live through our senses, but sexual is only a particular relationship for a particular purpose: to keep the race advancing. We have even forgotten what is joy and what is happiness and where it can be found. Somebody tries to find it in a tankard of beer, somebody in a glass of whisky, somebody in fruits and berries, somebody in abstinence, somebody in I don't know what, poking pins through himself, like you find the ascetics in India doing it, walking on fire, sleeping on nails. None of them have found the real thing, because you cannot find God in pleasure; you cannot find God in pain, either.

Our maxims tell us **why** we have to accept these things. We have to accept them only for one reason, not as God-given, but as given by myself because of my thoughts and actions of the past which have created samskaras, the *bhog* of which I am undergoing. Please remember, bhog is not confined to enjoyment. Unfortunately, in Sanskrit, *bhogam* means enjoyment, but enjoyment in the sense of having to undergo the results of one's samskaras. It may appear as pain, it may appear as pleasure. So, the maxim which says, "Accept miseries as blessings of God," is precisely for this reason, you see, that everything God gives is a blessing. I have converted that blessing through my perverted thought and through my perverted actions into a curse, the bhog of which I am now undergoing. Nevertheless, He blesses me because he has given me the ability to get rid of those samskaras, when everything will stop.

That is why in Sahaj Marg the process of cleaning is so important. But people don't want to be clean in this sense. Abhyasis come to me and say, "Will you clean out everything?" I say, "Yes, of course, there's no question of everything." You know, this is not a system of bathing you, where you put on a cap so that you don't wet your hair. Here there is total wetting.

Remember Achilles and his heel. It is a beautiful story, a story full of profound truth, that if even a single atom of you remains without having been soaked in divinity, there lies your mortality. That will be the door through which you will die; you will exit and have to come back again. Here we have to be absolutely, utterly, totally free of samskara. But people come and say, "Well you know, Chari, there is so much misery, but this relationship I have, a cursed relationship, yet it is the only thing I have, and if you remove this, I have nothing left in this world." So, should I laugh at them? Should I weep with them? Should I pity them? What should we do?

It is a very difficult problem. It's like a child saying, "No, no, I want to keep the mud on my hands. You can clean the rest of me." Dennis the Menace cartoons, thousands of them — hand hidden behind the back so that mommy should not see the dirt. Mother says, "Show me your hands." Next you see him in a rocker in the corner, you know, very grouchy. We are all Dennis the Menaces here. None of us want to be clean. We say, "No, no, I don't want to give up this. I don't want to give up that." People have asked me, "If your Master is so wonderful, so great, so divine, so loving, why can't he change me and leave me to enjoy this, which I want to enjoy?" It's impossible. Can a child grow into a man and yet remain a child? "No, no, Daddy, I want to continue to be in my kindergarten class because my teacher is so nice. She is kind, she is loving. I don't want to go to school."

So you see, growth means total growth. Total in the sense of growth in all directions: physically you must grow, mentally you must grow, intellectually you must grow, spiritually you must grow. Sahaj Marg does not understand how saints can be foolish. They may not be educated. Please understand the difference between lack of education and foolishness. No saint ever had a degree, but they were not fools. They were wise beyond our knowledge of wisdom, which only proves that wisdom is not obtained in institutions of scholastic education, which is why education never stops, and which is why here, too, we must think we are in a school.

Sahaj Marg is a school. Life itself is a school, because what we have not been able to grow into, we have to come again in an effort to grow again. We are not detained by any force outside of ourselves. There is no god who says, "No, you are detained in this class." But if I cannot handle this, how can I handle the next higher and the next higher and the next higher? So, if we ever talk about rebirth or you accept it, we are reborn precisely because I, in my wisdom, say to myself, "Master this class before you can go to the next level."

You know, when you have this computer-aided instruction, the first warning the lesson gives is, "Don't go to a level higher than this one until you have mastered it. When you have mastered level one, go to level two." Otherwise, you will make a mess of the whole thing, and probably erase the program from the computer. It applies much more to our existence. It applies totally to our existence.

Mastery means **self**-mastery. This is something you must all understand. When you call him a master, it doesn't mean you are slaves. He is not a master and you servants. He is a Master because he has mastered himself, and he serves you so that he can help you to master yourselves. It is in that sense he said, "I do not make slaves, I make masters."

So, this is a short introduction to our Sahaj Marg system of spirituality. Much is in our books, but as the old saying goes, "Ye have eyes but ye see not, ye have ears but ye hear not." Why? Because even though I listen, I don't hear because I only choose to hear what I want to hear, and the rest goes, you know, like waves washing on the shore. I see, but I see only what I want to see, I don't see what there is to see. We read books, but we read them selectively. We accept the paragraphs or the sentences which are in tune with our desires and needs, and we reject the rest.

Nobody has read a book completely yet — any book. But until I accept that totally, how can I accept myself totally? Because, remember, every time you reject something in Babuji's teaching, it is because you are not able to reject something in yourself. You want to hold onto it here, therefore you reject that outside. He said, "Be truthful." "Shucks! In this world, how can anybody be truthful?" We are not willing to give up our lying life. So, we reject that part of the teaching: Be not revengeful for the ills done to you. "Nonsense! Everybody's revengeful. Reject it." So, all the good things that can help us in his teaching we have rejected.

What have we accepted, then, of Babuji? That he never criticised anybody, that he loved everybody, that he was always smiling. He was not like Chari, who is giving us lectures all the time. He never spoke, his hookah was so beautiful. Now you may decide what Babuji was able to do for you if you are still at that infantile level of thinking of Babuji as some sort of cuddly mother who was willing to breast-feed you all the time, never spank you. Well, one does not spank a baby of three months. Nobody does.

So, you can see your own evolution in the way you see your Master. I am sorry to say that many people have remained stunted at a level before 1983 when Babuji passed away. Many, because they're always quoting Babuji to me. And I pray for them. In my heart, I weep for them because this is like an adult of fifty-two who goes to sleep with his teddy-bear; he can't sleep without it. There are such adults, it is not a laughing matter, Ivor Browne will certainly vouch for it. I know of cases where, without that teddy-bear he will not go to sleep. The wife is there, of course, but she only keeps him awake. It's the teddy-bear who keeps him asleep. So, don't make Babuji into some sort of nice, soft, cuddly teddy-bear who never reacted, who never chastised, who never... you know, all these things. It is still time to wake your inner Self up to what really He was and is and will continue to be.

Spirituality means facing the truth, absolutely without fear. Courage is not only for special situations, like when a man is caught with a hound jumping at his throat. That is expediency; that is not courage. Courage is the ability to live with myself as I am, while growing into what I have to be, loving both, not hating anything, not hating even myself.

So, spirituality is that which teaches us, first, to recognise in us, in ourselves, the cause of our present state of existence, while simultaneously revealing to us the cause of what we shall be.

Thank you.

WE CREATE OUR DESTINY

West Linton, Scotland

24 August, 1994

We have gone through some of the fundamentals of Sahaj Marg yesterday, defining important concepts. One, yoga means union with the divine — no lesser unions are implied. That automatically excludes things like *hatha yoga, laya yoga* and all the other yogas. Sahaj Marg is based on the ancient *raja yoga* system, which is used to regulate the mind using the mind itself. Therefore it is called raja yoga.

People often say, "I am doing hatha yoga. Should I meditate?" or, "I am doing laya yoga. Should I meditate?" Now, meditation is only a technique; it is not a yoga in itself. In Sahaj Marg we have this idea that meditation must be on a specific object, with a specific goal in mind. Otherwise, the process lacks dynamism. Concrete forms, names, attributes are all avoided because they are all limitations. Any form is a limitation. Any name is a limitation. Attributes are limitations. A man is 'good' — it means it is a limitation — not that it is not desirable — we are not talking now of desirability versus yogic necessities. In fact, whereas the Buddha preached the middle path, yoga says, "Transcend both."

There is a big difference here between the Buddhist middle path, which is neither good nor bad, but something in the centre — *via media*. Here we are sort of rising above both good and evil, all the opposites. So, there is no relevance to Buddhist concepts in Sahaj Marg. Also, Buddha's (if I may call it) nihilism has no place in Sahaj Marg. Many people think that Sahaj Marg is an atheistic sort of philosophy because often we have said, Babuji Maharaj has said, Lalaji has said, that, while we don't doubt the existence of God, nevertheless it is the Master who is important in our system. Initially, God has a place, has a function, let us say, in that when we have no Master and we wish to embark upon this royal road of raja yoga towards the transcendental goal of becoming one with the infinite, passing through two stages earlier, which are *mukti* [liberation] and realisation, we are advised to pray to God to send us a Master. This is very clear in Babuji's writings. He says, "When you need a Master, when you don't find one, pray to him, and he will come to your door."

To my mind — you know, I have discussed all these things with him — it is very clear that God sends us what in Islam they call a messenger, what in Judaism they call a prophet, and who are called saints in so many other philosophies, religions, systems. Thereafter, the guru takes the place of God. He is God's representative. It is, of course, essential here to be very careful and not mix up any guru with this idea that he is God. God can become the guru, but every guru is not God. Because often we have this statement, "I already have a guru. What should I do?" Of course, we cannot say, "Change him," because if you already have a guru, it is for you to go with him as far as he can take you. Recognise his limitation, because there comes a stage when he can do no more for you. Then, as Babuji Maharaj has said, it becomes the guru's responsibility, guru's duty and an aspect of the guru's integrity to tell you, "My son, I have brought you as far as I can take you. Now you have to find someone else to take you further." But in a society riddled with gurus, full, replete with gurus, and everybody asking for money, fees, I don't think any guru exists who will send a disciple to another guru.

So, we have to be very careful. Babuji Maharaj said, "It is better to be without a guru than to be with the wrong guru." We cannot say, "Well, something is better than nothing." — another stupid proverb. "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush." I have told you how stupid it was yesterday. "Something is better than nothing," another stupid proverb which I remind you today is not to be followed by us. Here, only the best will do. If it is not available, we wait until we have found the best. Or perchance, if society has fallen so much, that there is no highest guru available, then as Babuji said, we have to do with the next best. But the responsibility for selecting the guru is yours.

This does not, of course, mean that you can go around the whole world trying all the gurus and the teachers and the Masters and, I don't know, the thousands of systems which are extant today. But, like shopping — when you go into a shop, you know what you want. You don't have to look at every single item and decide what you want. I mean, then you would do no shopping, you would come back empty-handed day after day after day, and in the meantime the models are changing. Or, like a man who wants to get married and looks for the perfect girl, going around the world.

We have to know in our heart, and we **do** know in our heart, what we are looking for and what we want. If that preliminary impulse, that initial craving, that original sort of outlook on life is not already there, then that means you are not ready for the spiritual life at all. In a certain sense, we have to ripen, at least to the level where we feel the need to do something and we feel the need for someone to guide us in doing that something towards a goal which we are not able to define for ourselves, but which we know is not happiness, is not health, is not wisdom, is not long life — it is none of these material things. This is the foundation upon which a sound spiritual career can be laid. Otherwise, we come here because a friend is here, or we come here because it's a big society in which we can find partners, or we come here because we have a lot of time and, like the Masonic Lodge, the Lion's Club, we pass time pleasantly here. That is not spirituality.

So, when people come to us to start meditation, we have to ask, "Why, exactly, do you want to start meditation?" This is a duty that the preceptors often don't remember. "Why do you want to start meditation?" Then they hem and haw. And if they are hemming and hawing and have no idea of the purpose or the reason for which they have come to you, then you are duty-bound to tell them as preceptors, this and this and this is what we are capable of delivering, if you are going to co-operate fully. And what does this co-operation mean? That also has to be explained: that you have to practise the sadhana meticulously, exactly as specified by the Master — no changes, no experimentation, no alterations.

You have to follow the Ten Maxims. And then here comes this funny idea that somebody says, "Oh, what would you do if you are on the North Pole, where it is day for six months and night for six months?" No unnecessary and irrelevant questions, please. You are where you are, and you will be told what you can do, in the sense of feasibility, and what you must do if the system is to succeed. Actually, the system does not succeed — **you** succeed. And if you want to succeed, it is not so much obedience that we seek, as the intelligent pursuit of a way which is available to take you to the goal. People mistake this for obedience. We don't want your obedience. What on earth for? I am not telling you to obey anybody. We are only telling you, "Please do this. Please awake at dawn. Please have the same place for meditation." It is all explained why. So, it is not even obedience. It is for your own good, following certain principles, precepts, maxims, without which you cannot possibly hope to reach the highest goal.

So, let us not confuse principles for obedience. Obedience is when an order is given. Suppose I say, "Get out of this room." You must get out of this room. That is obedience. Suppose I say, "Stop breakfast wherever you are and march forward." You have to do it. That is obedience. But here we are only giving you a set of principles and a practice to help you to achieve what you want, to evolve to that level where you can be called a perfect human being which is synonymous with divinised human being. And that is for you. What does the Guru get out of this? Nothing.

So please, here you must understand it is all or nothing. This is not a nihilist path in that we deny the existence of God, *Shunyatah*, as Buddha said. There is no 'empty', there is only something which looks like being empty, an emptiness, a nothingness. So, 'nothing' should not be confused with 'nothingness'. It is like a vacuum. Yesterday I said that God cannot be absent from any place or any time, because He is both omnipresent and eternal. Because, if He was not somewhere there would be a vacuum, and in that vacuum He would Himself have to flow because nothing else can flow there. He is so subtle; the vacuum is so powerful. Therefore Sahaj Marg says, "Vacuumise your heart," which is done by removing all the trash, the rubbish, the so-called useful things. You know, when you clear out your cloakrooms or whatever it is, there is so much rubbish there but some of it appears useful, some of which we want to keep back. But a cleaning means everything goes.

We cannot do selective cleaning. When you put the vacuum cleaner on the carpet it removes everything. It may be flowers; it may be waste paper. Here, we are definitely theistic in our approach, in that we believe in the existence of God. Why do we believe in the existence of God? Most people believe in the existence of God because they need an existent God. They need somebody to appeal to. They need somebody to pray to. But that is a need-based belief. I believe in God because I need to believe in God, because if God were absent from my life I do not know what I would do.

But in spirituality, especially in Sahaj Marg, we believe in God because we have experienced the presence of God. It is positive. It is not a belief founded upon just faith, it is not a belief based upon need to believe, but it is a belief based on the fact of having experienced God's presence. Now how to do this? If you say, "What is this God whom we cannot see but whom we can experience?", there are so many examples of things which we feel but we don't see, or smell or taste — but we still believe in them — scientists especially.

I do not think anybody has ever seen an atom, or a nucleus, or the particles which make up the nucleus of an atom, or those funny things which are going by various names today — quarks, etc. Yet we believe in them and we say, "Science is rational, science is logical. Spirituality is not." I don't know on what basis even a scientist can say such things, because today's science is based upon unknown quantities, unknown entities, unknown factors, approximations, assumptions. Science does not deal today even with facts; it deals with hypothesis. And they get away with this by saying, "It was a hypothesis and we have changed it for a new hypothesis."

So, if you can believe in science, especially the Occidental people, and say, "Well, it is scientific," I, as a stupid Indian, a follower of an illiterate Master, would tend to laugh at you. With all my ignorance, with all my stupidity I would still laugh at the scientist who says, "Science is based on fact," because it is not.

We know the universe is infinite, but today we don't know even how far the universe extends. We do not know the number of stars in our own galaxy — it runs into the billions. We do not know how many galaxies there are in our universe — there are billions. And there may be billions which we can never see, which we can never know about. And yet astronomy is a science. Isn't it? Fundamental physics! I am told somebody here is teaching fundamental physics, my Indian brother. What is in fundamental physics that I should believe?

So you see, we have science on one side — let me, for the sake of convenience and also as a matter of truth say, the lower side of knowledge — we have the sciences. They are lower because they are material. They deal with the material universe, the material facts, so I call them lower. It is just a way of categorising. Then we have the solid part of this world which we can feel, touch, taste, smell, and hear, for which we have the five senses, which is common, apparent, obvious, sensible to all of us. And above comes the higher realm, the higher dimension, where again we cannot see anything, know anything, but which we can experience, which we call Divine.

So, in one sense the human existence is sandwiched between two unknowables: the divine on top and the scientific at the bottom. Two slices of bread, with us as the butter in between, and we are fooling ourselves with the idea we can know one, whereas this is not true because it is not science. I would humbly suggest that science is, of course, science. We have accepted this appellation for centuries, let us continue to call it science, but let us desist from calling it rational. Because, after some of those famous scientists, like Wolfgang Pauli, who died recently, Niels Bohr, you know, that group of scientists who upset Einstein, after they came into being, science has lost its rationality. This is my personal opinion. It is also my conviction that science is no longer rational.

Especially this theory that you cannot know where one is if you know his speed and you cannot know his speed if you know where he is. I mean, it is obvious! Now you are sitting here. I know where you are. You have nil velocity. But suppose you start off like a rocket at the velocity of light. I know your velocity but I don't know where you are. It doesn't need a Heisenberg to make such an obvious truth into a science. But it is a truth when it is applied to the world which is sub-atomic, sub-particular.

We have funny findings. That a particle is in existence for, say, one trillionth of a second. Who has ever measured one trillionth of a second? Some particles appear to be moving backwards. Can this be called rational? Well, we are not trying to criticise science, but just to show you the **limitations** of science. The theory of twenty years back is upset by a new finding today. In the medical field, my pharmacist friend here will tell you, yesterday's medicine is today's poison. That famous insecticide — what was it called, which has been banned? DDT — Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane — for decades we were using it with impunity, with the confidence that we were eradicating pests. Suddenly, one day we find it is poison and it is banned.

How can you trust a science where you do not know whether today's poison is going to be tomorrow's nectar, or today's nectar is going to become tomorrow's poison? And yet we believe in it! We believe in it so much that we say, "Spirituality? Hah! Eastern nonsense, Indian craziness, Ram Chandra-ian stupidity, Chari's fallacies," etc. But it is my contention that in this field of spirituality alone we can prove things, not for the general public, but in my experience, in your experience, that there are transcendental things, transcendental zones, transcendental realms, transcendental experiences, which prove to us that, from out of science which can be called irrational, insubstantial, purely temporary, we come to a world of experience which the scientists call the Newtonian world where things are more permanent. A chair is a chair today, it is a chair tomorrow, it shall be the day after tomorrow, too. An apple is an apple, a pear is a pear, a woman is a woman — thank heavens, as the French might say. And we don't move backwards in time. Which woman would like to have her husband moved backwards in time? Or a husband his wife?

So you see, from the unpredictability of science, from what I choose to call the irrationality of science, from the ephemerality of science, from the absolute changeability of science, we come to the human world of human perceptions, of human conceptions, human experiences, where things have a greater permanency than they have in the scientific world. Therefore we can share in experiences. When I say, "This is white," you also say, "Yes," she also says, "Yes," precisely because we see the same thing here.

Now from this we have to go up. Up where? Up is not a direction here. Up means in some sense a higher value, and that is now the inner world. It is as if this progression of values, progression of evolution itself — I am not talking now of morphological, biological evolution but of the evolution of the sciences themselves from unpredictable, material oriented, gross sciences to the human sciences of botany, zoology, biology, to the transcendental science of spirituality — seems to be a way in which evolution must proceed. Scientists, too, will have to follow this someday, that for their evolution, they may be Nobel Prize winners, it doesn't matter, but they have to know the limitation of what they have done, even after winning a Nobel Prize, and get on with the job of being human beings, because most of them are merely machines — heartless machines.

Today's scientific research is frightening. I have referred to this before. Things like gene-splicing, cloning, interfering with the fundamental facts of nature without knowing how to correct it if we go wrong. We might very well end up by re-creating the monster called Frankenstein which we saw in a movie fifty years back. I would not be surprised if one of these days suddenly you find somebody walking like this [wavers with arms outstretched] and catching hold of your neck and throttling you to death. It would not surprise me at all because that is the way today's science is heading.

Science has been unpredictable, useless, creating a body of knowledge which, for the average human being, is unnecessary, creating a technology which has made not only abundance but super-abundance, contributing to the steady deterioration of our environment, polluting it, killing off the fishes, the birds, the bees, now the trees — and we are next on the list. Perhaps we are the last on the list but we are nevertheless there. What is the value of such a science? I don't know. Why do Occidentals worship it? Why do they have temples to science? I don't know. Why they have prizes for science, I don't know.

Anyway, as I said, even scientists will have to recognise that they have created horrors which may not be able to be solved, which you may not be able to counteract, and they have to go to some other dimension of research. As I said yesterday, Babuji said he could neutralise all the bombs in this world. That is true science.

Creating a horror, any child can do. Getting rid of a horror is a different story altogether. I mean, we can all create horrors. You can put on a black mask, terrify your child at night in the dark, and it becomes a psychiatric case for the next twenty-seven years — electrotherapy, chemotherapy, all these therapies. In one instant of time, you can wreck a human mind. In one moment of time, you can break a human heart. But who can put that mind together again? Who can give a unity to that heart again — the broken pieces, put them together and make it a wholesome, live, living, hopeful, expectant heart again? Science does the one; Masters of spirituality do the other. In between, we are stuck. We are stuck only if we will not accept the way of redemption, the way of cure, the way of synthesis — putting together again. Science breaks up things; we put together things. Religion breaks up humanity; spirituality brings humanity into one brotherhood.

So you see, the thrust of spirituality is from matter to transcendental, beyond matter; from breaking up to integration; from loss of faith to bringing back faith into our lives; from despair and suspicion of love to faith and hope in love; from a godless, materialistic science to a God-filled, spiritual existence. Now, if I should have to ask you which would you prefer, it would be an insult to your intellect. After all, you're Occidentals, proud of your education, proud of your knowledge, proud of your development, and I belong to the third world — a suspect world, a dirty world, to which people are afraid to go. All the diseases are in Europe, the dreadful diseases. We have a lot of diseases in India, but they are not killer diseases. Yet, you people are afraid of coming to my country, and I come to your country with impunity. Because I have faith in my heart. I have the Master inside me. I am eternally under his protection. No circumstance on earth can change me or divert me from my goal. This is faith, you see.

What is faith but that, whatever may happen, I shall still be steadfast in my love and faith for Him. But in the Western world, we want guarantees. We want all this, and heaven, too — another stupid statement, most stupid, perhaps. "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush," well, children will believe it. But, "All this and heaven, too"? What is this arrogance that demands that I shall have all this if I am to have heaven? What is this insatiable hunger or thirst which says I must have all this and then heaven? What is this demand from a mere human being? I think it was Shakespeare who said, strutting about on the stage on his two legs, a mere biped, demanding that if I am to have heaven, I will have all this, too. So, think over it carefully.

Babuji Maharaj said he wants lions, not sheep. It was in this sense that we must have the courage to say, "At any choice, under any circumstances, whatever I may have to lose — I will have you, and nothing else". The 'nothing else' does not mean a negation of this world, because as long as we are here we need food, we need shelter, we need good health, but those are not our aims. Most of you have seen Babuji Maharaj, I think, who at the age of eighty-three could still travel a lot. He weighed a mere forty kilos. I mean, I could have lifted him up in my hand and bounced him about like a baby. He ate half a *chapati*, his needs were few, probably even for India. He probably needed a rupee a day for his existence. A rupee a day is five pennies — I'm sorry, it is even less — one fiftieth of a pound, two pence, today's pennies, per day, which is less than a pound a month. And he was happy, he was content. And many of the very great people of India came to see him in that dirty place Shahjahanpur, in a not very clean house, dusty, full of flies and mosquitoes, fell at his feet, wept before him, and requested his help.

You see, the reality of a situation is in this: the true strength is invisible, the true greatness is hidden, the true knowledge is un-manifest. But such persons exist, and before them even the crowned heads of this world have to bow. There is no doubt about this. You all know that the Queen of Greece used to visit Sankaracharya every year. Many do it surreptitiously. Even presidents of the United States have been known to consult astrologers, go to gurus, go to tantrics, look at the tarot cards. Because, president or pauper, we are humans, and every one of us has this need to know something about our future, not knowing, in our ignorance, that the future cannot be known, though in spirituality it can be created by us as we wish.

After all, if you are going to get drunk, you know your future is one of sickness, where your liver is going to break down, cirrhosis, and where you are going to die a miserable death. Do you need an astrologer to forecast this? The bottle does it. The bottle is your astrologer. In fact, there should be printed on the label, "My friend, you are headed for cirrhosis of the liver." Why, if in smoking advertisements you can say, "Smoking is injurious to health," why not on your bottles of Guinness and I don't know, Royal Oak, and the famous brandies, why not this sentence be added, "You are headed for cirrhosis of the liver." The first — later on, so many things will follow.

As I said, here it is possible to create our future because, after all, we have created our present! Samskaras prove to us that we are the creators of our destiny. As I started off this morning, there is no god who makes my destiny for me. We make it ourselves. If in my past I have created my present, surely in my present I can create my future. Therefore Babuji said, "Today, here, now. If you start, it is possible." Because tomorrow is another day; one more day of samskara added on to your existing load — more cleaning, more meditation. Every day we delay, the task gets more and more difficult. The time at our disposal is getting inevitably shorter. Nobody need predict this. Every second, we have one second less to live. I don't think this is a fact which can be disputed.

When we live longer and longer without doing anything about our future, we are adding a burden while subtracting from the time available, therefore very literally burning the candle at both ends. I have more to do in less and less time as each day passes. I wish scientists would have the intelligence to know this. Especially the old people are very foolish. I have known people of eighty saying, "Oh, I have lived eighty years, I don't see why I can't live twenty more." I mean, such people should think that they will live eternally because at ninety, he can say, "Oh, I've lived ninety, I don't see why I can't live twenty more." But the fact is, like a clock when you wind it up, with every tick it is unwinding itself till it will come to a stop.

Please remember most carefully that every day we spend or waste in this stupid business of accumulation of wealth, pleasure, power, we are adding to our samskaric burden and depleting the time available to us simultaneously. Every day our task becomes multiplied or even perhaps not just merely multiplied, but in some sort of exponential progression, until a time comes when I have all the burden of my samskaras and no time left — that is the moment of my death.

So, Sahaj Margians, it is very essential you see that we understand what Sahaj Marg is about. It is not a game, it is not something over which you have a choice. Heathen or hebrew, president or pauper, saint or sinner, we all have this problem of increasing samskaric load and decreasing time at our disposal, and young or old, the problem is the same for all of us. At age six, it only **appears** that we have much more of life to live. Who knows? Who knows when somebody is going to pass away?

Spirituality says, "Now, if you start, in one single cleaning, the samskaras of hundreds of lives is removed." And yet, there is this enormous and intriguing truth — that I, personally, have been doing cleaning for thirty years, and it is not gone. Imagine how many thousands of lives of samskaras, perhaps millions of lives of samskaras, we have brought, that by His mercy, by the technique Lalaji evolved, in one sitting, one cleaning, so much samskara is removed, and yet we have to struggle year after year after year. That is true only if we do cleaning alone and nothing else.

Babuji Maharaj said cleaning is a technique. No doubt it will relieve you of your burdens, no doubt it is possible to remove **all** your samskara, but you cannot exist in this world without some samskara left in you. It is what is holding you here, like an anchor holding a ship in harbour. It can be cut only when the ship is ready to sail. Are you ready to sail into the ocean of bliss? If you are, that last vestige of samskara can be cleaned and off you go. If it is not, inevitably, that samskara will bring us back here. "What is so wonderful about it?", somebody may ask. The problem is we may come back with just this much of samskara [a pinch of the fingers] which can be worked off probably in one tenth of a second by his grace, but we start living again, the sensory life takes over again, samskara accumulation starts all over again. Maybe we don't find a path, maybe we don't find a Guru, and off we go on this royal march, accumulating samskara and reducing time available until we end up perhaps even worse than in the past life.

So, this is a thing that cannot be put off into the future. It is a thing which could not have been practised in the past, because you have not done it. The past has brought us here; the present must take us into the future. The past was created by us, therefore the present can be the medium through which I can create my future. The past, however devilish it may have been, however corrupt it may have been, however decadent it may have been, nevertheless its effects can be wiped out and I can enter into the purpose, into the practice of creating a glorious, divine future for myself.

This is spirituality. And Babuji said cleaning alone is not enough; meditation alone is not enough. Because meditation is only a technique by which we regulate our minds, we take back the ability to regulate our minds. What is the third element that is still missing? Because, cleaning and meditation by themselves can probably give us liberation. Okay. Most of us may be tempted to say, "That's enough," like a prisoner saying, "Let me out of jail." But what happens after twenty years in jail? You come out, and you don't know anybody. Your old neighbourhood does not exist, roads have been renamed, new communities have come into existence, your father is dead, and nobody knows where your mother is — he would rather go back to jail.

But even to go back to jail, you know — I remember a story I read about Christmas Eve, and a man who wanted to go to jail desperately because he would be fed and looked after during the period of his sentence. He goes into a restaurant and orders a huge meal, eats everything, and at the end says, "I have no money to pay. Call the police." But they have these bouncers, and he is thrown out by two of them. His first attempt to go to jail has failed. Next he goes and smashes a store window. The police come along and say, "Ah, Christmas spirit. Okay, don't do it again. Let him go." He does several things like this to get into jail but no use. Finally, in despair, he enters a park and sleeps on a bench, and along comes a warden of the park and says, "You know, this is closed at ten o'clock. To sleep here is an offence. Come with me." And he takes him to the police station and he is put in jail.

So, even to go to jail we have no capacity. When we want to go to jail most desperately, we cannot. And that is the fate of the prisoner who is let out after thirty years in jail. He would like to go back, knock on the doors of the prison, call everybody by their first names, but they say, "Sorry, you can't come in here. We need an order to let you in." Look at this tragedy, you see, that heaven is barred to him. Hell also is barred to him.

So, we are here. Here we are neither in heaven nor in hell, but tasting a bit of both by our own thoughts and actions, not knowing which is which, mistaking hell for heaven and mistaking heaven for hell. When we are at peace and should be happy at home, we want to go out and have a drink with somebody — exchanging heaven for hell. Happily married with a chaste wife, not so beautiful, perhaps, but loving, but off with a flirt — exchanging heaven for hell. But is that heaven at least permanent? Because there is another fellow waiting to go into that same hell, who takes the flirt off even when you are dancing and you are left there. No wife, no flirt. Very real situations, I mean, you all know it. I am only talking from hearsay knowledge and book-reading knowledge, but to you it is a fact of life. Every one of you here has gone through this and will probably go through this again if you do not change.

So, to come back to Sahaj Marg, what is this third missing element? It is love for Him. Because, in the ultimate final analysis it is only love which can take you to the highest. Every mother wants the highest for her children — nothing less. Fathers may not. Fathers want for themselves, but mothers want for their children. The Master wants also for his children the highest — but only when we love him. When, like a child we can climb into his lap without needing his permission, without fear — that is the state of being a child of the Master. The rest, sadhana gives you the minimum. Love takes you to the maximum.

I hope I have been able to convey to you the superb and supreme possibilities that Sahaj Marg holds out for us. I hope I have been able to convey to you what love for the Master can immediately bestow upon you without all this blah-blah of sadhana. Because when you love, there is no deservingness. Richard Burton did not think of Elizabeth Taylor's deservingness when he gave her a diamond worth four and a half million dollars. He loved her, he had the money, and he gave it to her — enough. He loves us, he has that wealth which is at his disposal, he gives to us as we are his children.

But this is a demanding love. In, I think, the Hebraic or the religion of Judaism, perhaps even in Christianity, it is said, "Thou shall worship no false Gods. Thou shalt worship no other God but me." Here substitute 'Love'. "Thou shall worship no false loves. Thou shall love no false loves." It is a demanding love, single-pointed: one heart, one love. If one heart is capable of many loves, they are not loves. They may be affections, they may be attachments, etc, but not love. One heart, one love. And if that space in your heart is already occupied by Him, there is no place to love anybody else.

Of course, there will be big noise of protest, "Oh, I want to love my husband!" "I want to love my wife!" "I want to love..." Yes, but even now you are only **wanting** to love your husband, and **wanting** to love your wife. What difference has the Master made in your life? How many of you have been able to really love your wives or your husbands, that you think the Master will intrude and take away this love which you have not found yet? It is like a man with no money in his pocket who is afraid of pickpockets, saying, "Suppose I had money. Would I not have been pick-pocketed?" "Yes, of course, but you have no money, so why do you worry about it?" So, loveless women are worrying about how they will not be able to love a husband whom they have never loved, and men are worried about not loving a wife whom they have never loved. What is this parody of existence, this love, that in a loveless situation you are nevertheless afraid of loving Him who can create love in your heart, not only for your husband and wife, but a universal love?

So you see, this is not a question of robbing Peter to pay Paul, or taking away a husband from a wife or wife from a husband. It is a question of first creating love in a loveless heart and making that love universal, which, because it is universal, also includes your family. I hope you will understand this very correctly, otherwise you will fall into this error of saying, "No, no, I don't want Sahaj Marg. I am too much in love with my husband." May you be blessed with your love for your husband for all eternity. But it is an encapsulated love, a tiny love, a fearful love which dare not be exposed. Like a single wick burning in a storm, any puff of wind can blow it away. But when it becomes universal nothing can oppose it, nothing can supersede it, nothing can avoid it. Even a loveless husband will begin to love his wife and vice versa.

Sahaj Marg alone promises, I would say guarantees, us these things, provided you are willing to commit yourself to your evolution and for that reason you are willing to follow the principles and the maxims. Not out of obedience to the Master or to your preceptors, but out of a demand created by the need for you to evolve yourself. So, if there is obedience, it is only your own obedience to yourself, to the demands of your higher Self. If you follow it, it is for your evolution. If you evolve, it is for your sake. He remains a catalyst.

Thank you.

SPIRITUALITY IS GIVING

West Linton, Scotland

26 August, 1994

In my own interest I'll try to finish today, because every time I have to give a talk, I go through a sort of birth trauma. I have tried to place before you some views about science, as referring to the sciences of the material world. And how from science comes technology which helps us to live a better physical life, material life. I don't think sciences can contribute anything more than that. And I am, of course, including health in this, because health, too, is only a material phenomenon. I would also like to state that, with all due respect and reverence for science, we must keep it in its place. We should be masters of science, and science should help us to lead a better life, not necessarily a more comfortable or a luxurious life. Science should help us to maintain our health and not fool around with creating diseases which it tries later to cure.

Many of these things we all know. It is nothing new. I have never said anything that is new. It is only a reminder. In the ancient Hindu tradition, knowledge comes by removing ignorance. There is this most beautiful image of a mirror being covered with dust, and when you look into it you see nothing. But you just wipe away the dust or blow it away, and everything is revealed.

To the Hindu mind, knowledge is not acquired — ignorance is to be removed. To the West this is probably a little cranky, this idea, because we are so used to the idea of acquiring knowledge. But in the East it is a very well established, centuries-old belief about which even the Vedas mention that knowledge is nothing more than the removal of ignorance.

This automatically implies that we have all the knowledge that we need and shall ever need within us already. Only the ignorance has to be removed. The layers of grossness have to be removed, and that is done equally well by cleaning. I do not mean to imply that by sitting down and cleaning ourselves and going to the preceptor once a month, we shall all qualify for the award of PhD degrees in the various sciences. Not at all. But we **will** acquire the knowledge that is necessary to lead a sensible, sane, balanced life, in which there will be a great deal of contentment, there will be normal health, there will be normal, shall we say, satisfaction of our needs — not wants. And that is what life is about. The real life is not in the acquisition of wealth, material possessions, properties. They are as superfluous as unnecessary weight on the body.

In the West you are experts at maintaining your body weight precisely. Every bathroom has a weighing machine. I, too, fall into this temptation to weigh myself every morning when I see a machine. And then it gives me trouble and I suffer needlessly! If I had the right or the ability to do so, I would abolish weighing machines from this world, because we put too much trust in what we see there. And we try to estimate our health, our state of well-being by some stupid arrow or needle that fluctuates here and there, and makes our heart beat stronger or weaker.

So, normal life should be naturally lived. You know, little children are often fat. We call them plumpy, cuddly, but it is the way they are born. You call it puppy fat. During the process of growth they lose all of their fat. It is natural, but nowadays I find even children are given diet schemes, and doctors, paediatric people, they tell the mothers that their child is overweight at the age of two, three, and the mother starts controlling the diet of the child.

So you see, the foolishness of the old is being brought down to the young, and they are being made to suffer unnecessarily, and much more prematurely than they should, if at all. Instead of the old people having wisdom and passing it on to the younger generation, today we see the inversion in our lives, of the old people passing on their ignorance, their stupidity, their vices to the younger generation.

Today's evils in this world are attributable, I think almost entirely, to the elder generation. That is why children have lost respect for their parents. In the sixties you had this phenomenon of the hippies, the flower children, which was a negation of the elder generation and the history of the past. Unfortunately, as the British saying goes, they "threw the baby out with the bath water." Respect was lost, reverence was lost. I can have a foolish father, but I should not lose my respect for him. I can have a stupid mother but I should never lose my love for her.

So, in the process of evaluating a destiny which has been handed over to the younger generation by the older generation — a traumatic destiny, a fearful destiny, a possibly destructive destiny, because this love is lacking between the generations, there is so much mistrust, suspicion and fear — I venture to state that if the younger generation continued to love its parents, much of our modern day agonies would have been nullified.

What I am trying to aim at is that where there is love there cannot be suspicion. Where there is love there cannot be fear. "Perfect love casteth out fear," I said the day before yesterday. Perfect love must also cast out suspicion. At the same time, Caesar's wife must be beyond suspicion. Her behaviour, her comportment must be such as not to bring disrepute upon Caesar. So, women have a role to play in ensuring that their men love them, continue to love them, have faith in them, trust them, which means that covert and overt, both behaviours must be impeccable. Which means that the inside and the outside must be the same.

So you see, I was trying to bring into this picture of spirituality the role of love. It is an enormous role. I would say that ninety-nine per cent of spirituality is love; one per cent is sadhana. Science does not create love.

Science creates not even curiosity. It creates a lust for knowledge, more and more, more and more, more and more — of what I don't know. Technology creates, similarly, a lust for more comfort, more satisfaction, better houses, less noise, less dust. After all, this world is made of dust. I mean, you couldn't eat unless there was mud and soil around, could you? There would be no vegetables. If there are no vegetables and grass, there are no cows for you to eat, no milk to drink. And remember what the Bible says: "Dust thou art, and to the dust thou shalt return."

So, we are already dust. We are made of dust. Something is holding it together, like gravity is holding the solar system together, like gravity is holding the whole galaxy together, like gravity again is holding all the millions of galaxies together in a vast universe, of which we have no comprehension at all. We don't know where its centre is. In fact, its centre is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere, which is a definition of God. God is defined in one way as having a centre everywhere and circumference nowhere. To us, in this universe, we are at the centre of the universe. You can see stars all around you, galaxies all around you. And we are very much at the centre of this universe. Recently, of course, there has been a lot of criticism against science that probably started with Ptolemy, and as we graduated into the astronomical sciences, man's place from a person or a being as one in the centre of the universe has been progressively de-humanised, his importance reduced to nothing but a mere speck of matter somewhere in the outer reaches of the universe.

Science, on one side, contributes to our lust for material life, material possessions, material pleasures, material welfare, while dethroning us from the central position in this universe to something no more than a vehicle for genes to propagate themselves. You know, life has been defined as the way of the genes propagating themselves. Every human body becomes a vehicle for the genes — nothing else. Like once I said somewhere else, a tree is nothing but the way a seed propagates itself.

So you see, the human being, instead of being something which God created in his own image, has become a mere vehicle for genes to be passed on and on. And medical science says that genes are indestructible. Now, here comes the problem, you see. If genes are indestructible and in some way they are responsible, with the chromosomes, for the heredity and inheritance of characteristics and character and whatever you have, should they not be clean? So, cleaning again comes into the picture even if you look at human inheritance as a genetic inheritance.

I was once attacked for saying (I think it was in Courmettes in one of my talks), that we pay more attention to breeding our cows and pigs and our dogs than we pay to breeding human beings. It is true. If you look at all the indiscriminate pairing going on in this world, lustful pairing, with no relevance to love, nothing about love in it except the added word 'making', I think it is very significant that for something very sordid, very messy, we call it 'love-making'. It is as if we are using this process to somehow make love, create love. I beg your pardon for using such probably vulgar terms in a public speech, but it is the truth. I am always amazed when I hear this word 'lovemaking' used. Love-being, yes. If two people love each other, this sordid business becomes perhaps something of transcendental ecstasy, beauty, something creative. But, as somebody said in India, a saintly person whom I don't want to name, he said there was a time when there were brothels in restricted places known as red light districts in all the cities of this world; today the red light district has taken over the whole population. And, there are a few chaste houses which can probably be called the green light districts, to distinguish them.

So, you see where our lack of love, where our inability to love, where our fear of love has lead us. Therefore, again, we have to bring back love into that enthroned position of being the king of our existence, the queen of our existence, the master of our existence. God is love. Love must be the master of my existence.

Therefore, God has to be the Master of my existence — not my boss, nothing else. Therefore, spirituality lays stress on the need for love. Love, love, love, love — always. Now, I don't know how to proceed with this topic, because it is difficult to explain. A four letter word, and we have so many problems with it. And we don't know what it is, because love is not something you can lay your hands on. It cannot be a body. It cannot be a face. It cannot be a figure. It is a feeling. It is not a need. Lust may be a need, satisfaction of lust may be a need. But love can never be a need. Like the sun cannot need light — it is the giver of light — love must give, not ask.

What would you think if the lord of the Sun came and said, "Chari, have you a *pochette* lamp? Because I am in the dark," You would say, "What happened to you? You are the giver of light in the solar system. We depend on you, and now you are asking for light yourself." Just try to think what such a world would be. It would be dead, because without the sun there would be no life. This everybody knows, the merest tyro in education knows, you are taught this in schools, that the sun gives us light and gives us warmth. It created the coal that is buried under the earth. It created the oil. It creates trees, which we shall burn in future and be our fuel. It is energy. And this energy can be felt as heat, it can be felt as light. Similarly, love must give warmth and illumination.

What is this nonsense of feeling or imagining light in the heart? And what for? Why light in the heart? Why not darkness in the heart? After all, they are only just opposites. Precisely because this place which has become dark, a place of fear, a place stocked with nightmarish things, horrible things, frustrating things, has to be illuminated so that we can slowly clear out the rubbish, the horror, and get on with the job of putting the Master of our life back into it That means divinising the heart. Love cannot come from a human being. A mere human being may be capable, perhaps, of affection. We are all capable of attachment — relationships, as the West calls it — but certainly not love.

It is not my intention to offend you with this thought, but I have been in this game of spirituality for thirty years and I have been alive in a very conscious sense for another thirty years before that, and I speak with the conviction born of observation and experience. In my life, perhaps I have found two or three people who are capable of love — giving. Not receiving, but giving! One, of course, is my Master. Why did we all go to him? Why do people who have never seen him and became abhyasis last year, the year before last, talk of Babuji, a man they never knew, a man they have not seen except in photographs, a man about whom they could have known nothing except through our books? Why? What is it they find in that old man, his photographs, his writing, that gives them so much love for him, confidence in him, and the ability to practise what he preached and offered to us? Why? How can a person who is absent from this world for years give us so much which living people are unable to give us? What a man who is no more on Earth can give us, living people are not able to give us? What is this parody of existence? That what I should be able to receive from a living person, and which, if I was receiving from a living person, I should not have to look at one who is no more with us, it's absent. And what is it that is absent? Not merely the person, but the love.

When we remember people, we remember them because of love. Their love for us, which makes us, in turn, love them. So, love is nothing to be taken, nothing to be demanded, nothing to be pilfered. It is something to be given all your life. Of course, I do not mean by love what is commonly accepted as love in your societies here. I think from all that I have been saying, it should be amply clear that this is not the love of which you are speaking. At its best, it is affection At its worst, it is a mutually shared, lustful need — no more.

To bring back this love into our lives, we do all this meditation, cleaning, remembrance, prayer, because by illuminating the heart, by thinking light is there, we are able to slowly peep in. Like when a child is afraid of a dark room, you put on the light, and ninety-nine per cent of the fear is gone. Just the simple act of switching on the light removes the fear in the child.

In our sadhana, the first step is to switch on the light in the heart, as it were, and most of our fears about our selves are gone. All the hidden trauma, fear, horror, nightmare, everything goes, but it has to be done properly. If you are just going to sit and think you are meditating, but you are thinking of something else or someone else, it will not work. Therefore it takes so much time, therefore it takes so many years. And people say, "I've been meditating for twenty years. I feel nothing." There is nothing to be felt here in spirituality. What does a child feel as it grows? It doesn't feel anything new. John continues to be John. Sarah continues to be Sarah. Have you ever known that you are growing up? You are always you, from the date of your birth to, God forbid, the moment of your departure, you are the same. In your self, your identity remains the same. The body changes and grows. The mind changes and becomes wiser, perhaps, or more foolish, whatever it be. But you all don't change in yourself. You say, "Well, I am always the same."

So you see, in growth, there is nothing to see or feel. Others will see and feel. When a child becomes this tall and this tall, and the grandmother comes to visit after one year, she says, "Oh, David, how much you have grown in this last one year." I think one reason why adults don't feel it is because their sizes don't change so much. They wear the same trousers year after year, and they don't feel the growth. And they become used to not feeling their growth, physically.

Mentally, we have this problem of the ego, that we already know everything. After all, we are wise Occidentals, educated. Should we not know everything? "I am an Oxford-educated person," says somebody. Somebody says, "I am Stephen Hawking's student. Should I not know everything?" Everything about what? As Babuji said, "More and more of less and less." Our education gives us more and more knowledge of less and less.

You start off by knowing the world in your school. When you study history and geography, you know about oceans, you know about continents, icebergs, everything, about India, Europe, Africa, America. As you grow up, you become a physicist. Now, if somebody says, "Where is France?", you say, "It is in Paris." Many people do. And if somebody asks you about India, "Oh, by Jove! It must be that country where there are a lot of elephants and Rajas and snakes." You see how education has contracted you instead of expanding you. "Yes, but Chari, I know more about enzymes." "Oh, wonderful! What is an enzyme going to do for me?" "You'll digest your food better." But our forefathers knew nothing of enzymes. The Vikings of Norway knew nothing of enzymes. The gigantic Danes of the past knew nothing of enzymes, and today you look at the Danes and the Vikings — puny creatures, not fit to be called Danes and Vikings. Where are they, the old giants? Today you eat by the gram; they used to eat by the kilogram, and they were healthy and happy, and wise to the extent that was necessary. They knew about cow dung. They knew about the soil. They knew about grain. They knew how to harvest. Today, we have harvesters.

So you see, science has brought about a decadence that has gone unnoticed too long. "I know everything." About what? "Quarks." Another man knows about snarks and a third man, perhaps a Frenchman, says, "Is it something like a snail, perhaps? Is it edible, a snark?" You know, a snail and a snark, there's not much difference. Cargo and escargot. We must with great clarity perceive this ever narrowing scope of the mind as we proceed with our education. I have pointed out several times the dangers of specialisation. Today we are perhaps facing it in what could be a tragic conclusion to that specialisation.

So we say, as we have always said, beware of science. Be its master, but not its servant. Like anything else. Like your mind, for instance — be the master of your mind, not the slave of your mind. Babuji said spirituality is nothing but becoming the master of the mind, instead of allowing the mind to continue as your master. Now to be able to master science, master the self, I need something. What is it? Nothing more than to put the Master back where he belongs, not to leave him in a picture or in his writings in a book and carry them around respectfully, or not so respectfully, in our bags and satchels, but to make use of them. We certainly read these books, but do we make use of them? Now 'making use' means applying what you have read.

Are we applying Babuji's teachings in our life? "Yes, Chari, of course. I am an abhyasi for seven years." Well, it is good to hear that. I at least feel a sense of some satisfaction that you are still here after seven years of non-practice. "But Chari, he's twenty years." Well, that he is here after twenty years of very little practice shows there is still something in the practice, otherwise you wouldn't be here after twenty years of non-practice. If non-practice can keep you here for twenty years, if three minutes meditation per day can keep you here for twenty years, if a total ignorance of the Ten Maxims (because very few of you know what the Ten Maxims are, I am sure) can keep you here for twenty years, imagine how much the full practice could have done for you. Do you get what I am saying?

So you see, he is to be used like an apple is to be eaten, not to be kept and admired. You can admire it for two days, three days, but on the fourth day it is rotten and it has to be thrown away. A Master is there to be used. Some people went to see Mother Teresa in Calcutta when I was there, and Mother Teresa said, "What are you doing here?" They said, "Oh, we have come to see our Master." And it seems she asked, "What will you do with him?" A very pertinent question, a very wise question, and they had no answer. And they came back and said, "Chari, ..." I said, "Why didn't you tell her you are going to use the fellow?" Not misuse, but use, because unfortunately, the Master is being misused, too.

"Take not the name of the Lord thy God in vain." We are doing it every day with Babuji: talking about him, joking about him, laughing about him, pretending to love him, which is the greatest crime, and repeating Babuji, Babuji, for everything — which becomes another mantra. You know, all that we need is beads. Perhaps I should have them manufactured and sold and put the money in the Mission. If you will not benefit by the Mission, at least the Mission should benefit from you? Don't you think so? But here, even that is lacking. Because when there is no love, you don't use the Mission, and when there is no love, you will not also allow the Mission to use you. It is the same problem, you see.

Without love, you can neither be yourself, nor to thyself be true. "And this above all, to thine own self be true." What does it mean? The ability to face myself as I am, the ability to do that without fear or favour, and to proceed on to what I should be, what I ought to be.

So, that little light in the heart is necessary. Once it has been put in place, then the Master takes over progressively, the light becomes brighter and brighter. We see more and more, we feel more and more, and love begins to dawn in our hearts. When the dawn of the day comes, you see the light lightening the sky. Our heart becomes lighter, not in the sense of illumination, but in the sense of feeling lighter. That's why in many sittings abhyasis say, "Oh, I felt so light today." I **felt** light, not **saw** light. And that love will, from here, radiate outwards, not inwards.

I think the highest or most fearful, frightening example of the ultimate selfishness is perhaps the black hole in astronomy, where even light cannot leave it. The gravitation in those tiny bits of matter in space is so enormous that even light is curved back into itself. You see nothing, but through its gravitational effect on neighbouring bodies, astronomers conclude there must be a black hole there. It is significantly called a black hole. The human being of today is no less a black hole because such love as there is, is diverted back towards itself. So, we don't see hearts.

People say, "Which heart? Chari, you say meditate on the heart. Which heart?" Well, I thought we had only one heart. Should it be necessary to ask this question, "Which heart?" I have seen many people, when they sit for meditation, the new ones, they just feel here, you know, to make sure the heart is there and then they start meditating. I mean, it's all a big joke, but it's also a big scandal, it's also a big tragedy that this heart, which is capable of such a total love that it can embrace the whole universe, is doing nothing but embracing itself, what in psychology they call narcissistic love. And about which Babuji has referred in one of his books, where this Hindi poet says, "For thousands of years, the narcissus flower is bemoaning its blindness because it is so much introverted, it can see nothing, not even itself." *"Hazaaron saal nargis apni benuri pe roti hai."* That's what Babuji has written, and he says, "Such a flower will not bloom in a garden." A garden contains flowers which broadcast their beauty, which broadcast their perfume on the air.

Everything in nature gives. The sun gives, the moon gives, the stars give, flowers give, plants give, bees give. The sole thing in creation today which does not give is the human being. So, when we become spiritual, the first test is, do we begin to give? A preceptor, does he give sittings or just hang up his certificate on the wall and say, "I am a preceptor. I have nothing more to do. My life is made." Such a preceptor is only another black hole, a preceptorial black hole, instead of being a mere human black hole. And if a Master should do it ... Suppose Babuji said, "No, no, you see, I have so little light. I can't give to anybody else." I mean, he would be forgotten even in Shahjahanpur. But today he is remembered. Why? Because he gave, gave, and gave. You all know the story of his life.

Spirituality is giving. Giving without reservation, giving without limiting what you are giving, giving without thinking about whether the one who is receiving deserves it or not. When the mother breast-feeds her child, she does not think of whether this baby deserves her milk, because if the baby were not there, the milk also would not be there. It does not need any logic or intelligence or education to know this fact that it is because of the baby the milk is there, and not because of the mother. It is because there are people waiting to receive, that the giver has something to give. But if the giver thinks, "I have accumulated, I have earned. It is all mine and I will not give except to those I choose," he becomes first a miser, then a black hole.

It is a pity that astronomers have not recognised this fact that, while they have located a few black holes out there in outer space, there are about two and a half billion on Earth today, and we have not noticed it. So much for science. I think somebody should give a PhD degree to me for discovering this fact! I have always been fond of PhD degrees. You know, one of my unconscious, subconscious, shall I say, I won't call it shame, but regrets, is that I did not have PhD, DSC, FRCS and all that behind my name. I would have loved a string of letters, but perhaps my father gave me such a long name that more letters were not necessary. Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari is big enough! [laughter] This is a joke, but at the same time not a joke, because if you don't have a name for yourself by being a giver, then you need these degrees to be added to your name. Jesus Christ was not a PhD, Buddha was not a PhD, Ramana Maharishi was not a PhD, Mohammed was not a PhD, nor were my Masters. What is a PhD for? What is it worth? Again, only to earn your living. Professor — but when you retire, what happens?

I visited a house on the shores of the lake in Zurich, where I think Carl Gustav Jung used to live for some time, and all that I found was a house. Not a very beautiful house, not a very good looking house, not a very comfortable house, but famous because of the man who lived in it. Churches are churches because there is supposed to be God in them. So are temples. So are Buddhist *stupas*. So should we be. A human being should be loved, welcomed, because of what is in him. Not of what he is, but of what there is **in** him or her.

I made a suggestion the day before yesterday that only through universal love can we learn to particularise love into our own life and bring it about, that a man loves his wife and a wife loves her husband and we love our children. Because, a universal love cannot exclude the family, but love for the family excludes the universe. I think that is one of the great reasons, important reasons why in the past people who purveyed God, purveyors of God, priests, were expected to be celibate. Not because celibacy has any particular value in spirituality, but because if they had a wife and a family, they would not think of their congregation, their flock and they would be betraying their profession.

But we are in a *grihastha* life. We must have a family, a wife, children. And we don't love God by loving the family so much as, loving God, we learn to love our families. It is a contraction from the universal to the particular. He who loves everything will surely love his wife, too. But he who loves his wife, or pretends to love her, will not love anything else. Therefore, today you find in our familial loves and affections people are afraid. The husband will not let the wife go for meditation. The wife will not let the husband go for meditation. What is the danger in meditation that these people are seeing by which a husband says, "No, I don't want you to go there. If you go there, don't come back home"? What is it they see that is so dangerous? You must find the answer. Why don't you find the answer to this question? Why does my husband, or my wife, detest meditation to this extent that if I go for a sitting, I cannot go back home? What must be the nature of this man or this woman who can say such a thing to me, when I go only for meditation and nothing else? Whereas if I go away with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, they say, "This is freedom, this is democracy. She or he is free to lead their lives in their own way. Chari, I cannot interfere. She's grown up or he's grown up and they know what they are doing."

But when it comes to meditation, there is this dictatorial attitude. Why? How is it that a husband will tolerate his wife flirting with another man, but not tolerate her going for meditation? I have known many men in our abhyasis, too; the wife is off with somebody and he says, "Chari, I can do nothing about it. I have my suitcase packed. It has always been packed for just such a contingency." Also the wives, they say the same thing. "Who knows when I will have to leave?" But what about meditation? What is wrong with meditation? Are you committing adultery in meditation? With God perhaps?

What a stupid society we have created, what a truly illiterate society we have created, what an ugly society we have created, where immorality is condoned as the freedom of the individual, but a moral life will not be accepted. Don't you think such a society needs to be changed? And who is going to change it? Every one of you. If you don't change, and if you are incapable of changing at least your family and your local environment, how can you be like the sun shining upon the whole world? The possibility will not come at all. I mean, it won't even enter your mind that such a thing is possible.

Now, if there is universal love through meditation, through cleaning, through receiving transmission from the Master, through his preceptors or directly, it becomes possible. It becomes possible to see that universal love embraces everything, and then there is no fear because now the person only gives — there is no question of receiving. And what does it matter who is with me?

Even if the Devil were to be here, I would make him sit down and do some cleaning. Of course, he needs it, the blighter, because he, too, must be wondering what he is doing down below in Hell, a fallen angel — Lucifer. I'm sure if he was not so power-hungry and egotistic that "I will challenge God himself," he would be sitting here among us and saying, "Please, for heaven's sake, at least these people don't know where they have come from, but I know where I have come from. I am *shaitan* — Satan. I have fallen from the hall of God himself. Please clean me. That's all I need, and up I go again as Lucifer."

So you see, we have to have high ideals, noble ideals, fearless idealism, because unless we are fearless, we cannot be spiritual. Master said he wanted lions. Why? Because a lion is fearless. He did not mean that, like a lion, we should have a pride of lionesses around us. The days of indiscriminate breeding and the survival of the fittest do not exist in human beings. In human beings, unfortunately, it is not the survival of the fittest, it is the survival of the most foolish, the most lustful, the most stupid that is happening, whatever your colour, whatever your race. Don't you think all this indiscriminate coupling is nothing more than degradation of the race?

I don't know which of your counties is famous for its pigs, the huge big ones. Even they would laugh. "What are you producing, for heaven's sake?" Should you not wonder at what you are going to produce, when you are looking after your apples and your cabbages and your beehives? "No. This is freedom. We are human beings, we are perfect, we have been created in the image of God. Therefore what we do must be right. Not that we do what is right, but that what we **do** is right." Like one of the dynasties of the British: "The King can do no wrong." It should have been, "The King can **never** do anything which is wrong," but it was meant that whatever the King does is right because he cannot do anything wrong.

So you see, science has to be used as the material wing for our earthly life. Reasonable life, reasonable comfort, reasonable satisfaction — no extremes. Religion gives us some vague, indistinct ideas of something we call God. It is supposed to instil into us a sense of what is morality, what is ethics, how should interaction among human beings be. These two are the foundations upon which rest our material and our religious life, ethical life, moral life. From this foundation we have to build a spiritual life, where instead of worshipping science, where instead of worshipping a God, we begin to love both this and this.

Love should not exclude even matter from its vision, from its totality. Today you see people putting bits of rock in their drawing rooms, flotsam and jetsam from the shores as pieces of art in the corners of their drawing rooms — trash. Why? Because in some vague way, we realise that these things have been important to us. A tree has been important in my life. We know what desert people feel about trees. Water is important, not to be wasted in four showers a day. You know what the desert people would do with that water. You know that people who go to Mecca on this pilgrimage, the *Hajj*, are given one small bucket of water with one litre of water in it per day. And they manage. And you know, Babuji has said that in the Arab world, the greatest sin is not fornication, but waste of water.

So, sins and virtues are relevant to a local geographic or climatic situation. Among the Eskimos, the highest honour to a guest is for the host to give him his wife for the night. To us in India it sounds immoral, but to the Eskimo it is the highest hospitable tradition — because the guy must be warm. There is some sense in it. Muslims have four wives — legal. There is a reason for that, too, because in their internecine wars they killed off all the males, and the females had to have some sort of protection, a life of security, so a man was allowed to marry four wives. But we want to put everything together today. We want the hospitality of the Eskimo, the multiple spouses of Islam, the yoga of India, the philosophy of China, the acupuncture from somewhere else, the vodka of Russia. You know?

It is like our cinema. The leg of a beautiful girl dangling in the water, separately shown, then the beautiful girl herself, shown, and somebody singing in the background, supposed to be this lady singing. And we look at this and say, "Oh. Wonderful legs, wonderful figure! [whistles]" It is a composite that you see. There are no individuals like that in this world. Even Richard Burton, after he married Elizabeth Taylor, is said to have remarked that her legs were too short. [laughter] I mean, it is history; it is a recorded fact — which only goes to show that in this, there is no perfection. And anybody who translates the cinematographic perfection into the human world is stupid.

Where do we find it? I mean, I would love to have a Master who is perfect in every way. There he is! I mean, nobody can question the fact that he was handsome beyond any human male I have seen. Not desirable, but adorable. Not respectable, but worship-able. And what made him like that at the age of eighty-three? Something which shone from his heart. Why do I mention this? Not to praise my Master — he doesn't need it — but to show you that the source of all beauty, physical, mental, material — everything — is in the heart. Like when we see light streaming out of the windows of a house in the darkness, we say there is a hospitable house. But if the curtains are drawn so that even one ray of light cannot come out, one tiny piece of music cannot be heard, then we say, "That house, no use knocking on its doors. They will probably put the dog on us." Such are the houses today — no light from the windows, no sound from the inside, no heart.

So you see, beauty is in the heart, and for such people you must look. If you are a woman, you must look for a man with such a heart, and if you are a man, you must look for a woman with such a heart, where the beauty of the **heart** shines. Because all this Marilyn Monroe stuff will fade; it's not going to last forever. Therefore cosmetics, from the age of sixteen to the age of seventy-two, trying to erase the wrinkles which become like fissures on the skin. Nothing is more ugly than a beautiful girl with make-up on. Beauty does not need any make-up. 'Make-up' is, again, like 'making love'. Make up what?

So, the very fact that you have to gild the lily, as they say, proves that there is nothing behind. As I was telling, one of my Indian friends said, "Oh, white girls are beautiful." I said, "If you kiss them, you only get lipstick. You don't touch the lips, ever. And for that, you don't need a girl; you can buy a lipstick and put it on yourself!" You don't have human smells any more. It is Lamar or I don't know, *parfum de* something. There is even one called

Samsara! I was wondering what the 'samsara' is about, but I don't have the courage to experiment with it!

So you see, the thrust of spirituality, like I gave once an example of KGB, you see — *Karma, Gyana* and *Bhakti.* Karma is what we do in the material world and the consequences thereof. Gyana comes from the very tentative, very rudimentary knowledge of God that we get from our temples, from our respective religions. By attending to both, giving them their respective places and by mastering both of them, rising beyond religion, rising beyond science, we come to the stage of bhakti, which is only an ability to adore, respect, and love. That is the true beginning of spirituality.

So, I think that I have said all that I had to say about spirituality and I hope that, unlike our books, which go unread, you have heard at least some of what I have said, and I hope you will make of your life something which is not dependent on any other human being except yourself, because remember, dependence on the Master is only dependence on yourself, because we depend on Him who is inside. He is only a symbol of what is inside. Here, inside **all of us**, here, every one of us has the Master inside. But, like you need a mirror to see your own face — no man or woman has ever been able to see their own face in any other way — you need Him to show you what is inside. Please try and find Him.

Thank you.

VI

USA

September, 1994

THE INNER LIGHT

Molena, Georgia, USA

4 September, 1994

I used to take pride in the fact that I knew everybody in the Mission. At the same time, I was hoping there would be a time when I would not know anybody in the Mission because everybody would be new. Otherwise it means the Mission is stagnating; there is no growth. So, I am really happy to see so many people I don't know whom I have to meet, shake hands with, you know. It's a nice feeling. I am also very happy to see old faces, because you know in life, it's like a river — something flows in, something flows out — what you call the flux of time.

So, it's reassuring to see that both ends are, sort of, protected, the old and the new. I hope when I come next time, whenever that may be, by Master's grace there will be many more here. I would really like to be unable to remember anybody. You know, that would be the ultimate state, of course! Except the One. You know the importance of constant remembrance. It is not to remember the many, but to remember only one. "Love him who loves all." "Remember him who remembers all" — we should add the second slogan there.

The main idea of my talking to all of you today is to clarify what we are trying to do here. Because you know, you have seen letters being handed to me all the time. Most of them are expressions of difficulties, problems, frustrations. Then people come, sit in my room, weep a little, air their frustrations a little more, give expression a little more, and some say, "Oh, I have been meditating for so many years, but..." But.

So, meditation does not guarantee happiness. I am afraid to say this before an American public, but it has to be said, **especially** before an American public. Meditation is not for happiness; meditation is not for joy; meditation is not to heal wounds. Meditation is for nothing that we can call human, except in the sense that we have to rise beyond the human to something which we call divine.

The human existence is a foundation for our work. People often ask, "Why don't you start with the animals?" Of course, we would love to, for they are also life, living things, but they have no mind, they cannot meditate. So obviously, we cannot have anything to do with them. That is left to nature to bring them up to the level of the human existence, from where we can try to do something for them.

So, this human existence, as it is in each one's case, is the foundation from where we start. You may be happy — we start from there. You may be sad — we start from there. You may be crazy with frustration — we start from there. There is no such thing as a happy abhyasi. In fact, I should say there should not be. Because the moment we are happy we become contented and we say, "Oh, I've got it made. Sahaj Marg is a wonderful system, you know," and off we go to Cleveland or Santa Barbara or New York, all very happy. But the happier you go in that sense of the mere human happiness, the more problems you are going to face when you get home.

So, it's better to go from here very sad, very sorrowful, and find peace and happiness at home again. I assure you that is what happens, because this is a very sad misconception, that meditation and cleaning is going to do everything for us. It is going to solve our matrimonial problems, it is going to find us the right bride or bridegroom. All these things fall under the scope, or the purview, of our samskaras. It is samskara which decides how we shall live, where we shall live, what we shall do, what we shall suffer, what we shall enjoy — everything. They are in the past. That is the foundation we have laid. We are constructing the superstructure now.

So, as long as the samskaras remain, your human situation cannot be changed at all. Please understand that very clearly. Spiritually, as the Americans say, "The sky is the limit." I would hazard a statement that we have no limit at all. In the spiritual existence there is no limit. In the material existence, yes, there are very definite limits, and we have to accept this fact and go along, understanding this, that a man remains a man, a woman remains a woman. You cannot have sex-change through meditation! Not possible, you see. I mean, sometimes I have felt I would like to be a woman, because they get away with everything short of murder! [laughter] But it's not possible. In fact, I once told Babuji Maharaj the same thing and he said, "You know, you can be like a mother without being a woman." My Master had a way of getting around these obstructions, and he came out, you know, like a rattlesnake or like a rapier thrust — he never had to wait for an answer. He said, "Parthasarathi, you can be a mother without having to be a woman." And that is a very good thing, because when a man can develop the ability to be a mother — not in the sense of baby-sitting and, like these men do sometimes, you know, half an hour here, half an hour there, not in that sense — but in the true sense of a motherly heart, overflowing with love, overflowing with concern, then spiritually we are fairly advanced.

Babuji Maharaj used to say that the relationship between a disciple and a guru can be in so many ways: friends, lovers, brother and sister, etc. "But," he said, "I always prefer to look upon my guru as my mother." Because, the mother is full of love. In the Indian tradition the mother **is** love. There is nobody else who can love like a mother.

So, we have to try to understand that the women must remain women, be mothers in the real sense, not just producing a baby and claiming to be a mother, which is what happens nowadays more and more. The fact of having a baby may confer a so-called theoretical motherhood upon women, but are they really mothers?

Are they willing to give their lives for their children? Will they die for their children? That is the test of motherhood. Fathers have to learn to become more and more soft, gentle, kind, yielding, loving.

So, the goal seems to be, in both cases, whether we are men or women, this softening of the self into something which we can call a motherly heart. The body is only that — just a body. It is the heart which is different. And this difference must go, so that finally, men and women are the same in every way. And then we can have this miracle of progress, where men and women have not to say, "Oh, you seem to prefer men. All the advanced people are men. Women are left behind." I hear this complaint so often, and I have spoken about it so many times, too, but because there are so many new people, it bears repetition: that mothers waste their love on merely human beings — on husbands, for instance! Yes, it's a tremendous waste of love to love your husband! [laughter]

Then what should be the relationship between a husband and a wife? Affection and participation in common ventures like parenthood, and the spiritual life. As I was telling a youngster yesterday, "One heart, one love." It cannot love more. Nor can we serially love one after the other. It is not possible. We love or we don't love. If at all we love, we love one and no more. The rest are all substitutes for that original love.

It's very much like smoking. I used to enjoy smoking, but the only smoke I enjoyed was the first smoke of the morning — the rest was trash, nicotine, cancer sticks. The really enjoyable smoke was the first one in the morning. Then what are we smoking twenty and thirty per day for? Repetition. Looking for what I cannot find by doing it again and again.

We waste most of our life in this search for something which is so ephemeral, so transient, which is almost non-existent among human beings, thinking, "Well, now I have found it." Gone. "No, no. Now I shall find it." Number three — gone. So, where do we stop? Spirituality comes and says, "Please give up this search, because here that love cannot exist. Your heart is meant to love something which is transcendental." Our human hearts are not created by God to love things and places and persons — mere nouns, according to grammar. It is meant to love the Creator. If we love Him, we are able to love everybody else. If you cannot love Him, you will not love anybody else. It is not possible.

So, even the secret of love, how to find love in a human relationship — it is not through squeezing the heart, breaking hearts, cutting open hearts. It is by finding that heart which holds all the hearts together, you know, like a grand ribbon, and by loving that, to love everything else. Universal love does not mean loving one by one. A man who says, "No, no, Chari. I am embarked upon universal love. You know, I have done it a hundred and one times. This is my one hundred and second adventure." That is not universal love. That is serial love, serial search for love. Not serious — serial. Not c-e-r-e-a-l, but s-e-r-i-a-l. Often it is the first, because at breakfast we are very loving [laughs] and it drops off progressively, the lovingness drops progressively. That's not what we are talking about. We are talking about real, permanent, eternal love. And that can be only where He whom you love is permanent, eternal in His nature.

This is what Sahaj Marg is trying to orient you towards. You must understand that this is a very serious goal, a very serious pursuit of a very possible, real, love. We are not talking about, you know, husbands divorcing wives and saying, "Oh, I am going for Sahaj Marg. No more serial love for me. Only that one love" — not like that at all. But we have to understand that among human beings in any human relationship, there are going to be limitations, there are going to be frustrations, there are going to be problems, and every one of them is going to make you stronger and stronger, so long as you remain in the relationship and develop.

You know, if a boy of sixteen commits suicide, he's not going to develop any more. Many people commit suicide thinking that they have solved the human problems, but spiritual science says their next life will be even more difficult, because they have run away from the field. It is like a man who is fighting a war, and the soldier runs away. He gets no sympathy. He is caught. He is put in jail. He faces a military court. Perhaps he can even be shot.

So, life has to be mastered by living. And 'living' means living under every circumstance that we have to face, because **we** created those circumstances and situations by creating our samskaras. It is **we** who are responsible for what we are. We are responsible for our sufferings as much as we are responsible for our joys.

The wise ones know that pain gives us increasing capacity. The more we suffer, the more we **can** suffer. It's not true of enjoyment. There is a limit. Think of any enjoyment and see whether there is a limit or not. One can go so far and no further, in pleasure and enjoyment, whereas in pain, it is an endless pursuit of pain, and the more you have of it the more you can tackle, until ultimately there is no pain which can touch you. That is strength. When we are able to master pain by having increased our capacity to bear pain as we get bigger and bigger elements and doses of it, that is true mastery. Such a person is invincible. What can affect him? Death?

Why were all the saints sufferers? One was burnt at the stake. One was crucified, one roasted — I mean, you see all their lives. You don't ever hear of a saint sleeping and peacefully dying in bed surrounded by his relatives! It has never happened in the history of life. Such a person is no saint.

The ultimate suffering is to face the pain of death cheerfully, smilingly, saying, "Come. I am waiting for you. Let me see what you have to offer." And take it from me, for such a person there is no death. One who is master of pain is also a master of death. Nowadays, in psychological literature it is stated that the ultimate pain is the pain of death. Why should death be a pain? If it were a pain, why then do people commit suicide? So, it is not the ultimate pain, in any case. There are bigger pains, worse pains, more troublesome pains. Therefore a man chooses suicide as a way out of these things. Therefore, it is always a lesser pain than the pains we have to bear here. Otherwise there would be no suicides. The very fact that people commit suicide shows that death is not such a big pain after all. But suicide is no solution.

My Master always said that life has to be lived. Life is a school. It is where we learn so many things. Not the science of life — there is no such thing as the science of life — we leave that to biology and botany and zoology. Here, the science of life is how, living as a human being, I can transcend my human condition by very simple means. Sahaj Marg means 'simple'. Sahaj Marg means 'natural'. And what do we do here? Nothing big, nothing wonderful. A few minutes of meditation, a few minutes of cleaning, some so-called constant remembrance. I mean, people talk of throw-away prices and clearance sales — this is the biggest clearance sale of all! Where Babuji says, "Come on, I will send you out by the droves!" For such little effort, for such little attention to our evolution, we get so much. Perhaps that is why people don't understand it, people don't believe it, people don't trust it. But just to make you believe and trust it, we cannot make it complex. That would be a lie. That would be a lie to the Masters; that would be a lie to you.

We have to understand that today we are progressing towards a civilisation where we are going backwards, as it were, but really forwards. Going back to a simpler life, going back to simpler methods of production — 'small is beautiful', etc. Natural foods, natural manure. After fifty years of stupidity and foolishness and Western technology and science, we are going back to the humbler wisdom of the human being, cutting away these trammels of science which appeared so beautiful but, which like everything beautiful, is only enticing and gives much less than it promises. This applies to everything.

Babuji used to say, "Don't be misled. You have to create your life. There is no God who creates it for you." Prayer is useless. That is why people come and say, "Oh, I have been praying for years and nothing has happened." But who is there to answer it? I have to answer my own prayers. How? By getting rid of my samskaras. The moment my samskaras are gone, my future destiny is different. Every day that I clean myself, my destiny changes. You may know it or you may not know it, but it is there. But instead of doing that we say, "Oh, you know, I don't like cleaning. Meditation is good." But, meditation without cleaning is useless — practically useless, virtually useless.

Now, we don't like cleaning. Why don't we like cleaning? Because, I think, as children we did not like to be bathed! Yes, you see, Dennis the Menace, poor fellow — every time his mother comes to give him a bath, he tries to run away or he wants his dog with him in the bathtub. We are like that. We don't want to really be put through this cleaning process. I think there is a fundamental psychological problem, because when I clean myself (any one of you), you don't want to face up to this fact that you have a grossness which you have created yourself. There is nobody else left to blame. We are so used to blaming others for everything. "No, no. She said this. He did that. He looked at me in this way. He didn't say, 'Good morning' to me."

In Sahaj Marg you cannot blame anybody. Either you create your future or you give up creating your future — in which case the future you have already created in the past continues to unroll itself before you — a life without change. Can it ever change? Yes, but only when the samskaras are finished. But unfortunately, we live a life where we come with, I don't know, let us say, ten kilograms of samskara, and by the time we are at the end of our life it is two thousand kilograms of samskara. How are we ever going to get rid of this?

You all know the myth of Sisyphus, climbing up three steps, sliding back four steps, up and down — this is what it means. It is not in our power to clean so capably, so thoroughly that we don't have any more samskaras in us. One, because we cannot go so deep into it. Two, because we are not able to live a life where we do not create any more samskaras. So, it is going on piling up. Therefore we need a Master. People say, "Why a Master? You know it is repugnant to us." **Us** — the royal 'us', like the royal 'we'. "We in the West, Chari." You know, this is how they begin! I laugh inside first. Then when they continue and say, "Oh, you know, we in the West, we have mastered nature," now I am tempted to smile — you know, I cannot still laugh because the other man should not get angry! Then when he says, "We in the West, Chari, are masters of nature, and you know it," then I really burst out laughing, because I know what I know, but that poor fellow doesn't know what I know! And what is it that I know that he doesn't know that I know? That this whole idea of being masters of nature is stupid!

So, we have to come out of this shell of culture and sophistication and civilisation and, you know, velvet tissue paper, beautiful porcelain toilets. It is said that the Shah of Iran had golden toilets in his palace. Golden doorknobs. Golden toilets even on his private plane! Imagine eighteen kilos worth of gold. But what went into it? [laughter] It's not royal, you see!

So, white or black, man or woman, civilised or uncivilised, our samskara is always the same. Please remember, if there is one unifying factor today in human beings, it is the sameness of our samskara. That being the case, our lives are also similar. We all suffer the same things, we all enjoy the same things, we are all looking for the same things. How does a white man look? The same way the black man looks. You are hunting for something, he is also hunting for something. You also seek the same pleasure that he does. You are hungry with the same appetites as they are. What is the difference? The colour of your skin? Makes no difference.

Spirituality says, "Friends," — not Romans and countrymen, but brothers and sisters — "we are all one, and until we recognise this universality of this oneness of the human being, wherever he may be, whatever colour, whatever race, whatever sex, it will not be possible for us to reach the Goal." Because right here we are making the first mistake that, "My grossness is better than yours because I am civilised. You are still a tribal being. My grossness is better because I have a doctorate in nuclear science. You have only a doctorate perhaps in spear-throwing." Things like that, you see. Or, "I have more cosmetics on my face, and you have only some, you know, fat taken off the cowhide." We must recognise that we, as human beings, are all one. Because of our samskaras there is no change. We have the same joys, we have the same pleasures, we have the same sorrows. When a white man's wife dies, he is as sorry as a black man is, when his wife dies. Can there be a difference in their sorrow?

But today in this world you find that we are not cognisant of this fact. We have lost consciousness of this fact. When people are dying by the thousands and hundreds of thousands in Africa we are happy. Nobody asks you to send your dollars there. But try to be sympathetic. Think — they are also human beings.

You talk of the butterfly effect, you wonderful scientists. That a butterfly suddenly flying in Tokyo can create an avalanche in Switzerland. It's a well-known scientific fact. What your Christ said, what my Krishna said, what your Buddha said, that, "Not a leaf shall fall but that I shall know," is today being proved scientifically. You may even whisper in your tent, but somewhere it is going to have an effect. This is science about which I am talking about, not spirituality. Yesterday I promised to give a dose of science! So, we shall start with the butterfly effect. There are two butterfly effects, you see. One, the real butterfly which is fluttering on Mount Yokohama and creates an avalanche in Switzerland, and the other, these butterflies which create havoc in our lives. [laughter] Both are dangerous. Both have small beginnings. Both have beginnings which you don't even perceive at times, and yet it can end in disaster.

So you see, we must give thought to this idea that small beginnings can have big ends. People say, "Why, sir? Just meditation, Chari? Just closing your eyes for half an hour. For heaven's sake, how can it take me to where I am going?" Try it. If a butterfly in Yokohama can cause an avalanche on a mountain in Switzerland, why not a small meditation create change in this world, by rejuvenating our human beings, by re-creating them into what they should be, and taking them to their destination on the wings of a butterfly?

So you see, today we are trying to understand spirituality through science. But I understood science only through spirituality. You know, I am a very poor fellow here [points to head] — not much there. But because of my Master, because of his spiritual education, I can understand many things which I was never educated to understand. Human nature, for one thing. People spend years studying psychology, behaviourism, Jungian psychology, and so many other ramifications of these systems, but you are not able to understand yourself!

You are the first human being you should understand. What is the use of understanding all the human beings on earth if you don't understand yourself? It is like a doctor who is curing everybody but who is not able to cure himself. "Physician, heal thyself," the old proverb says. Why? Because we are all masters of trying to create in others what we should be creating in ourselves. "No, no. I want you to be perfect, you know. I love you too much. Look. I don't want you going astray." I am telling my brother Luc from Montreal, Canada. But he says, "Chari, what are you doing with yourself?" "Oh, I will come to that when I have transformed all of you and changed all of you. There is enough time." And next morning, maybe, Mr. Chari doesn't wake up at all.

So, every experiment in human existence, in human living, in human evolution, must start with us right here. Like homeopathic medicine, where the medicine is proved by people taking the medicine, we have to prove the system on ourselves first. But unfortunately, here again, people want to see an elevated person. "Show me one of your realised souls." I remember once, two very intelligent, well-educated people came to Babuji. They said, "Babuji Maharaj, we are very impressed with your system." Poor Babuji, you see. He needed certification. "We are very impressed with your system, but Babuji, only one small thing before we start meditation." Babuji said, "Aha. What is it?", because he had hope, you know, when they said, "small thing." They said, "Please, we want to see some of your realised souls." Babuji said, "Why?" They said, "So that we will be," you know the common word today, "**motivated** to take up meditation."

You see the poverty of people who come to such a place where the Master is sitting, and they want to see elevated people! Do you get the meaning? [laughter] Yes! They are facing the maker of realised souls, the creator of realised souls, the liberator himself, and yet they are asking him to produce two other human beings, you know, as proof. When they left, Babuji said, "You know, this is my fate. This is my destiny." Poor man, he used to suffer a lot, because with every human being who came, he had high expectations that at least the next one would be worth his effort, his attention. It was never the case. Because people judged him by his external appearance, people judged him by the lack of formal education and degrees, people judged him by his not-too-good English, not-too-good Hindi, not-too-good anything. But that which was essential in him was there, and that they never saw.

I used to be very fond of these German candles. You know, I have a passion for candles. In Germany you find these big thick ones, you know, one foot in diameter, beautifully carved and engraved and painted, and enormously expensive — a hundred dollars a candle. Once, I was foolish enough to buy one and take it home. I had kept it for eighteen years, mind you. Last year, there was an electricity failure in my house, and my daughter-in-law lit the candle and it was over! [laughter] A hundred dollars down the drain, and a hundred dollars eighteen years back, eh? But that is not the real part of the story! When

I asked her, "Priya, what have you done?" she said, "Appa, every candle gives the same light!" [laughter] So I had to put up my arms and surrender. "Yes, you are right."

Now, that is the essence of human beings — the same light is in all of us. A small story about a candle, but an enormous truth, that the same little tiny light is here [points to heart]. Don't look at the form — hundred dollar forms, five hundred dollar forms, ten thousand dollar forms — don't look at it. When it burns it will burn because it is wax. We make this mistake again and again, and we never learn the truth. We go after pretty things, tall and handsome for the women, short and svelte and petite for the men. At least, that's the French version! And where does it lead us? To the same burning, stinking flesh. "Oh, this too, too solid flesh," Shakespeare says somewhere.

So, please try to remember that in spirituality, we are not concerned with you in your external form, in your external brilliance, in your beauty. We have no concern. We are blind to these things. I say this deliberately because people come and some of them expect to be specially received with a red carpet. One says, "I am a professor of nuclear science with UCLA, and I have to wait half an hour for Chari to see me." Yes, but I am looking for the flame in your heart, not for your PhD degrees. If that flame is not there, you are as useful to me as cow dung — and even less to yourself. What is the use of you — you know, sometimes you have this frustrating experience that there is no electricity, and you take up a candle and it has no wick. What will you do with it? We often have this experience in India because we make slipshod things, and there is no wick. Now, I cannot find a wick threaded through the candle and then start burning at the top. Is it possible?

So, when a man comes without this little thing, the tiny flame, there is despair in the Master's heart. He says, "How shall I bring back this light into this heart?" That is really tough work. If the light is there [blows softly] you blow it up a little, like the embers in your fireplace; it is fairly easy. But if that light is missing, it has to be lit all over again. So, my Master used to say, "Make sure that this light is not extinguished, because once it is extinguished, there may not be a person who can light it for another ten thousand years."

In the old days, streetlights were lit by people with long poles, but today you press a switch somewhere and all the lights go on. We want that to happen in the spiritual field. From one candle you can light another candle. But from no candle, what will you light? Nothing.

So you see, in spirituality we are not concerned with anything that is concerned with the flesh. Nothing. It does not matter if we suffer? Yes, we have to suffer because we created our suffering. It seems a very heartless way of sympathising with you all! I am really sympathising with you, but real sympathy is in exposing you to the truth, trying to make you accept that truth, so that you will have the courage and the strength and the need to change that truth into a better truth. If you will not accept it, no one can help you.

So you see, all our talking, speaking, books, etc, are meant to tell you this fundamental fact that, if this light is not there in you, you are useless even to yourself. Forget your utility to others. But if it is there, you can be useful not only to yourself, but to the whole universe. Spirituality is not a game to be meddled with. It is not psychology. It is not physiology. It is not science. It is not art. Then what is it? Love of light. Which light? I love my lamp very much, you know, because I got it free. It's a nice gift. It is supposed to be the most powerful lamp. I tried it; it goes more than a hundred yards. No use. It is love of this light inside me. As I am able to progressively enable it to become stronger and stronger, brighter and brighter, I don't need all these lamps. Then comes the time when you may be walking in the dark, but your path is illuminated. By what light, you don't know. It's not necessary to know. You may be walking over the edge of a cliff, but the path extends for you.

How? Not necessary to know. It does — that's all that we need.

So, you see the miracle of Sahaj Marg, that starting from a tiny pinpoint of light, it can be developed to such an extent that it can illuminate the whole world. That's why people are called the 'light of this world' — Jesus Christ was called the 'light of the world', but he was not the only light of the world — Buddha was also called 'the light of the world'.

There's an interesting story about a boy who was, perhaps, too lazy to follow spiritual practice. He went and told the Buddha, "Master, what is the use if my light becomes so strong? Because your light is already filling this universe. How can my light fill the universe?" He said, "My son, the light does not occupy space. Your light will add to the light already filling the universe. It, too, will fill the universe, and the light filling the universe will become stronger and stronger, more and more powerful."

So remember that, too, that by your becoming spiritualised, you are not excluding anybody from anything else or excluding yourself from something. Every person who has evolved to that level is an addition to the total spiritual wealth of this universe. Therefore Babuji was bold enough to say, "Such a saint — one is enough in this world at a time." You don't need two. When you are in a very dark room, one candle is enough. A second is only for additional light. But without that one candle you are lost.

So, let us try to keep our flames alive. Let us try to nurture them. Let the Master make that light grow and grow until it shines out of us. All these pictures you see of the saints with halos around them only try to represent this light shining out. Therefore, spirituality is not merely a personal affair. In the beginning it may look as if it concerns only you, as if you are here for your own spiritual evolution. Yes, of course you are. But when you are evolved, you are no more for yourself. You are for the whole of humanity. Therein lies the universality of Sahaj Marg. Therein lies the universality of love. That is what the heart is meant for. I hope all of you will permit your hearts to be developed in that way, so that every heart becomes a love-filled, light-filled heart.

Thank you.

SPIRITUALITY AND MEDITATION IN AMERICA

Molena, Georgia, USA

6 September, 1994

(Transcription of a video interview with Shri P. Rajagopalachari conducted by abhyasis Marsha Thompson and Kevin Kirby at the Molena, Georgia ashram.)

Marsha: Chari, we welcome you to the United States on your return visit.

PR: Thank you.

Marsha: And we thank you very much for coming today to talk to us and answer some questions that we have about spirituality and meditation in America.

PR: Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here with you.

Marsha: We thought that our audience would like to know a little about you before we start. Could you tell us how long you've been teaching spirituality and meditation?

PR: I have been practising this for about forty years now, As far as teaching is concerned, I don't really think I'm a teacher in that sense. More of a guide than a teacher. We help people to do things for others and do things for themselves.

Marsha: And that's the difference between a teacher and a guide?

PR: Yes.

Marsha: What did you do before devoting yourself full-time to this pursuit?

PR: Well, like everybody else, I started with a course of religious instruction in the Hindu religion. I read some of the basic texts like the Bhagavad Gita, and parts of the Vedas. Then I involved myself in a process of initiation into the Brahmin part of the Hindu religion. That entailed a daily recitation of the Vedas in the morning and the evening, wearing a particular form of the *dhoti*, which goes around the waist. That lasted about four years. But before that, I had already started meditation when I was a student in Calcutta.

So, even during this process of religious practice, I used to meditate by myself, but without proper guidance — just from books, reading about it and trying to do it. It landed me in a substantial mess, and therefore I had to look for a guide. Eventually I found my Master, Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur.

Kevin: Let's say I believe in God and I go to church on Sunday. I figure I'm already a spiritual person. Can you please tell us, what is spirituality?

PR: Well, if you don't mind my saying so, this phrase, "I believe in God," is highly suspect. I mean, for a person who is practising spirituality to say, "I believe in God," God is not something to be **believed in**. We believe that, in spirituality, one must love God, because in all religions, God is love. So, if God is love, I don't have to believe in Him; I just have to reciprocate that love. And if He loves me, there is no question of reward and punishment.

The basic difference between religion and spirituality: my Master used to say that religion has two instruments: temptation and fear. Temptation of heaven and fear of hell. The whole business of ethics and morality is based on fear and temptation. In spirituality there is neither reward nor punishment, there is neither hell nor heaven. But, there is the possibility held out of our having to do something by which we can evolve into the higher kingdom, which Christ calls the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. And Christ also says, "My Kingdom is not of this world." So, we don't expect any rewards in this world, in this physical mortal existence. Nor is it a reward. It is a stage of evolution which we achieve, which we grow into, like a child grows into adulthood and into old age — naturally. He doesn't have to go and think about it.

Kevin: So it's not just a belief, it's a process.

PR: It's a process of growing into a Divine state of being. And then we understand that God has always been with us, we have always been with God. The separation has been created, if I am permitted to say so, by the sense of religion which puts God as something far away from us, somewhere in heaven. We are here and hell is down there below. It is as if we are suspended between a heaven above and a hell below. And anything can cut the thread and put us into hell, or somebody up there has to pull us up.

Kevin: Let's say that I have a good life already — a good material life. Why should I want spirituality?

PR: The question is whether we **want** spirituality or whether we **should** want spirituality at all. It's not a question of wanting. It's like a man saying, "I'm very healthy. Why should I breathe? Why should I eat? Why should I defecate?", for instance. Health depends on these things. Similarly, a good material existence may be the result of what we have done in the past: a good education, a good upbringing, a good moral education — these give us what we call 'successes' in this life. But is it enough? There is something which unites all of humanity — sick or healthy, rich or poor, educated or stupid — and that is our mortality. The whole thrust of spirituality is to get out of this mortal state, and into a Divine state. So, our terrestrial conditions, as such, have no bearing on the need for spirituality. In fact, I object to this phrase, 'need for spirituality', because it is not a need. It is something of an evolutionary force with which I have either to go by co-operating with it, or be left behind.

Marsha: So the spiritual being evolves just like the physical being evolves, or there's a similarity or a parallel between the **physical** evolution that most of us are familiar with and the **spiritual** evolution.

PR: Well, we have this idea of the physical evolution, starting from the amoeba (or whatever it is) to what we are today. That is, more or less, what I prefer to call a morphological evolution — change in forms. Whether we are an amoeba or a human being, the life inside is the same. Nobody has yet discovered whether the life in a chicken, and the life in a goat, and the life in a human being are different or the same. Spirituality says that **life** is the same. The **form** in which that life is present on earth is different.

Therefore, spirituality says it doesn't matter what you are; it doesn't matter who you are. Hitherto, up to the human level, you have evolved naturally, spontaneously, by the thrust of evolutionary forces. Dinosaurs have been left behind, for instance. Many forms of life have been left behind; they have not evolved. But that does not mean that **life** does not evolve.

We leave this body at death, or what we call death. Where does life go? Surely, into another form. This is subject to debate. Some people will say no, some people will say yes. But spirituality says, "If you look back to when you were born, where did you come from?" The body, yes. Medical science, biological science, offer you an explanation: there is a sperm, there is an egg; the two come together. There is the process of conception and you are born. Where does the life come from?

So, as life comes into us at birth, or at the moment of conception, life has to go somewhere when we are finished with this mortal existence. Spirituality says, "*Quo vadis*." Not *domini*, but you. Where are **you** going? Where is your life headed for? Spirituality says there is a definite goal. It says, "Your goal is the original home from which you came, the Divine home which we left." In Christianity I think they call it 'the Fall' — Adam and Eve and all this theological business of Christianity. Hinduism has some parallel stories, too. So have other religions. But in all that, we are dealing with the past. Our future is, as we have come down from above to this level, we have to go back from this level back to our original home. You may call it Heaven, you may call it Infinite. You can call it the Central Region, as we do in our system of meditation. And for this there is a process of evolution which my Master used to call, not so much evolution, as **devolution**. We have **become** something, and now we have to un-become by removing the layers of what we have added to our thinking processes and our active processes, and release the soul which has been bound in this body.

Actually, it is an evolutionary process involving un-becoming of what we are. Not in the ordinary sense of the word 'unbecoming' the way it is used in English. "This is unbecoming. That is unbecoming." No. Un-becoming — like un-ravelling. So, it is actually an evolutionary process by throwing off things you have acquired: characteristics and, perhaps, character itself at a higher stage of evolution, because God cannot be said to have a character.

Kevin: That sort of triggered a question. Can a person have a good material life, be successful, have a good job, and all of that, and still be spiritual?

PR: Well, you know spirituality says when you are a truly spiritual being you must be perfect in everything that you do. Perfection. Not in the sense of a good life or a rich life, but a perfect life. A perfect life in which if I do something, it is done as nearly perfect as a human being can do it. Suppose you become a surgeon; you will be as near a perfect surgeon as possible. Suppose she becomes an artist; as nearly a perfect artist as possible. Because, there are creative forces which are hidden in our body — in our selves, I won't say 'body', but in our life — which have not been released because they are blocked by what we call grossness, accumulations of guilt, accumulations of culpability, accumulations of these ideas of vice and virtue, which block creativity. And even the best artists you can think of have been blocked.

You know, when you think of style in music and arts, each one has his own signature, as it were. Why do they have to create in a particular pattern all the time?

You should not be able to recognise a fine painting and say, "This is a Picasso. This is a Cezanne. This is a Rembrandt." You should not be able to.

Spirituality says, as long as there is an author to a book, or an artist who can put his signature to a painting, it is a limited scope of creativity. It is from the **human** level. At the spiritual level there is no more a creator. The ultimate Creator takes over. His powers flow through us. And to what results I dare not sign my name, because I wasn't even conscious of what I painted, or wrote.

Kevin: So, the artist no longer considers it his work, but merely what has passed through him.

PR: Yes. Yes. Even in a mundane situation like when a man and a woman have a baby. You can't say, "I made this baby." You can say, "I had this baby." But not 'made' it. So, when you cannot even make your own babies, how can you make things which are so highly creative that they almost reflect the Divine in us?

Kevin: That may be why in this country we refer to babies and children as being gifts from heaven, sometimes.

PR: Yes, they are always gifts from heaven. The life comes from outside. You see, biology creates the body, but it is God who creates the soul and puts it into it. So, in that sense we have not created anything. That's why in Hinduism they say, "Think of these children as God's children put into your trust." You are trustees, as it were. You are to look after them, help them to develop to their capacity, promote their welfare, well-being, and help them to evolve into the higher life. This is what parentage should really mean in a spiritual context.

Marsha: When you talk about children and the proper relationship with children, it makes me also think of other family members — not only children, but our parents and all the people in our lives. How does love fit in with that?

PR: Love, as we understand it in the normal human way, is a very limited concept. Love of husband for the wife, and wife for the husband, filial love for the parents, parental love for the children, and that's about it. The rest is all friendship. In spirituality we have what is called universal love, which is not a personalised love **for** a person, but a love which flows from the heart without let or hindrance, as they say in legal parlance. It flows because it **must** flow. Like honey flows out of a honeycomb when it is full, or like milk flows from the udder of a cow. The cow has no more control than we have.

At this stage, there is no particular person towards whom my love is aimed or directed. It flows. And like the sun which shines in all directions, this love goes in all directions. It also embraces these personal loves like filial love, brotherly love, sisterly love, because they are **part** of the universal love. Now we are only dealing with the part and not with the whole. So, spiritual love is a holistic concept. Human love is, at best, a selfish relationship between two people — whether friends, husband and wife, father and children, things like that. It is a limited concept. So, from the limited we go to the infinite universe.

Marsha: That seems to also grow from the idea of evolving spiritually, that we evolve into the whole.

PR: Exactly. We have to become **capable** of such a love.

Marsha: In the course of our lives we're always looking for purpose in everything that we do. Is spirituality that purpose that we should be looking for?

PR: In spirituality, as far as I have understood after thirty years of practice, there is a goal, but not a purpose. The goal is the evolutionary goal, that we have to become what we have to become. Spirituality says we are born as human beings, but we have a lot of tendencies which are not human. We refer to them as animal tendencies. But I think that is being unfair to the animals, because animals don't have tendencies as such! They only react to situations. They don't think and do. You see, the whole idea of 'doer-ship', that "I am responsible for this act," is in the human being. In the animal it doesn't exist. When a tiger kills a bullock and eats it, it has no sense of guilt. It is just fulfilling its natural need to eat. But when a human being kills, even with the highest patriotic motives, there is an element of guilt left. Is patriotism sufficient reason for me to kill another human being, just because he is on the other side of an arbitrary line that I have drawn? Friends this side, enemies that side?

So you see, we have to think deeply about this sort of thing. When we think of a purpose, again the self enters into it — the lower self: **my** purpose, **my country's** purpose. But when we think of an evolutionary goal as such, it is common to all human beings. Therefore, I must not hesitate in saying that patriotism has a limited value. You are patriotic to your society; somebody else is patriotic to his society. But when I have a transcendental goal, and we offer this to human beings everywhere, human beings are actually united in a common pursuit of a **goal**, not a purpose. A purpose is defined as something which is at the end of a sequential series of activities. Today my purpose is to go from here to New York, let us say. But what will I do there?

So, a goal is different from a purpose, in my understanding. Maybe my English is faulty, perhaps I could have explained it better, but spirituality does not define different individual purposes of different human beings. Spirituality says all human beings have the same goal or destination. Purpose is individual. So, in a sense, purpose divides human beings and goal unites human beings. In this context I might add to Mr. Kirby's first question: religions also divide us. Spirituality unites.

Marsha: So, how can we bring spirituality into our lives?

PR: It is difficult, you know. If you want to change your dress, you have to undress first and then put on a new dress. Isn't it? Similarly, if you want to become spiritual, you have to leave certain things before you can become spiritual. Instead of saying you have to leave or give up, which sounds in a sense like making a sacrifice or doing without something, we say 'transcend'. Now religion is, according to the teachings of my Master, only the kindergarten school for inculcating in human beings some preliminary idea of God — a very intangible theory of God, something that is rudimentary. That there is a Creator, He is born, we should worship Him, we should love Him, etc. And it is also a school (or supposed to be a school) to introduce us to the idea of ethics and morality. The function of religion stops there. In all religions — this is without bias to any religion — in all religions it is the same. Religious instruction means a certain basic moral instruction, a certain basic introduction to the idea that there is a God. But it does not tell us anything more.

In religion there is no direct experience of God. I don't think that, you know, even so-called saints have had a direct experience of God. Now, Moses is supposed to have had a direct experience of God. But he comes with fear in his face, as he is depicted in the famous picture of Moses which came out some years ago. Spirituality says we can never see God, because God has no form, no name, no attributes, so He cannot be seen. He cannot be known.

You know, the way I know you and the other questioner here are by your attributes. One is male, one is female. One is tall; one is of medium height. One is wearing a jacket, the other is not; she is wearing a skirt. We distinguish between people by their attributes. A name is an attribute. Now, God cannot have a name. God cannot have a form. Because if He has a form, and the form falls off, can we say God is dead? God cannot die. God cannot be born. In the Hindu religion, we say He was, He is, and He shall ever be — eternal.

But, in religion they teach us of a God who has come down to earth. Like in Hinduism we have avatars: Rama, Krishna, and so on. In Christianity you have the son of God who is a representative of God on Earth. And now, after Christ, we have **his** representatives who are the Popes in the Catholic tradition. How many of them have had the direct experience of God — or a revelation? Or, is it just that we induce in ourselves a particular euphoric state, and **think** we have experienced God? For instance, I am often hearing, especially in Europe, about religious paintings, religious music. Now, what is religious painting? I have no idea. Just by making a picture which you think is God, can you call it a religious painting? Just by singing something which we call church music, does it become divine music?

So you see, we have to be careful about the terminology that we use. To me, divine music comes when we sing with a divine **consciousness**. The subject may not be God at all, but the divinity in the voice, in the way that the song comes out of me through the creative forces flowing through me, makes it divine.

Kevin: Would it be accurate to say that religion, its rules, its literature, could be almost as if they were the clothes that someone wore, and yet spirituality attempts to go beyond the external coverings and go not even into the individual but to what's inside that individual?

PR: Yes, of course. It is correct to say that. For one thing, in all religions we find that worship is a petrified thing. The same ritual through centuries, without any change in character, any change in the way of presentation of God to the worshipers. We have a scheme in Hinduism, of God appearing as what we call an avatar. He comes as a boar, as a pig, as a horse, a man-lion, and human. This is supposed to depict, not God coming as a boar, a pig and as a half lion, half-man — it is a depiction of the human being's evolution which is progressively changing his idea of God. The primitives understand God in a different way from the civilised persons of today. The spiritual people who are truly evolved, their appreciation of God is totally different. I don't say 'understanding' — I say 'appreciation', because God is not to be understood.

You see the totem poles of certain tribes. You see the idols in the Hindu temples. You see the cross and the crucifixion of Christ in the Christian church. We also see how, in our own evolution, our appreciation of God changes as we grow spiritually. So, the truth of spirituality is, or what spirituality claims to be the truth is, that we shall know God, appreciate God, experience God, only when we have become almost like Him. You know, like 'like knows like'. A cow does not know what a human being is. But if it were to become a human being ...

Marsha: Do we need a living teacher to grow spiritually?

PR: Well, a teacher is always alive. [laughter] I mean, we can learn from books, up to a point. Otherwise we don't need schools; all we need is books at home.

Marsha: And you said that you had a teacher.

PR: Yes, very much so. And he had a teacher, too.

Marsha: You know, a lot of Americans are very sceptical about self-appointed gurus or religious leaders who want money, power, or fame. How does one find a real teacher?

PR: I think this is a prejudice in all people. You are prepared to pay a doctor and you have no qualms about it. You are prepared to pay a lawyer's enormous fees, and you have no qualms about it. You don't say he is a crook. But when it comes to religious instruction, we have these funny ideas that he should be this, that, or the other. But spirituality says, as you look for efficiency in a doctor, efficiency in a lawyer, effectiveness in any system, if you want to practise spirituality you must practise a system which is effective. The system must be effective. The man who teaches it must be able to teach effectively. Because often, you know, you can have a chemistry book and the teacher doesn't know what he is talking about. And we have to rely more on the book than on the teacher, which is a ridiculous situation at best.

So, we need both the system and the teacher. And between the two, I should say the teacher is more important. Because the book is printed and it remains printed for all time, whereas the teacher gives the system a flexibility that is necessary for growth to this generation, as we are growing in spirituality (like clothes have to be changed to fit a child as it grows up). He has to ensure that it is in tune with the human situation of the present moment. That is very important to remember. Religious teachers are always living in the past. Frauds are living in the present to make money. Spiritual teachers help us to grow into the future, without demanding anything from us. Therefore my Master said, "If any spiritual system asks you for money, stay away from it, because spirituality cannot be sold." Evolution cannot be sold. Evolution is our birthright. All that we need is somebody to guide us. And it is the guide's duty to guide us — free of charge.

Kevin: I suppose we should be happy that spiritual teachers don't charge as much as doctors, then!

PR: Well, spiritual teachers don't charge **anything,** let alone 'as much as'. At least in the system that I know, we don't charge anything.

Marsha: Another question that I find people here have is, "Do we have to change our family relationships, give up all of our possessions, and leave life as we know it, in order to grow spiritually?"

PR: That is again, you know, some sort of inheritance from the past traditions of all religions. In Hinduism also we have this: that a man gives up his family and his life and puts on yellow robes and becomes what we call a *sannyasi*. But, in true spirituality there is this idea that, to become something like God, to evolve into something like God, we must be capable of two attributes which, unfortunately, are lacking in most of us today: love and sacrifice. Religion asks you to love a God and to sacrifice to a God. Spirituality says, "Love all, and through love, learn to sacrifice." Now, sacrifice what? Not the family, because once you have married it is a commitment to that lady whom you are married to, or the gentleman to whom you are married, and to the children that we beget. We can't get out of that commitment very easily, because it is a trust, as I said earlier. But there must be a way of evolving into a Divine state without having to give up this. Spirituality says that is possible. In religion it says no — asceticism, celibacy. Even when Christ walked the shores of the Galilee, he said, "Give up everything and follow me." Spirituality does not say it.

Spirituality only says, "Give up everything in **yourself** which can be an obstruction to your spiritual growth." Like all the wrong character traits that we have. Replace them by spiritual practise with what are human qualities such as love, generosity, compassion, mercy — all that, for instance, Jesus Christ is worshipped for. But according to my Master, these are natural human characteristics and traits which you have lost. So, spirituality says from what you are (which, as I said earlier, are people with animal instincts) we have to evolve to a human level where these things become natural. And now, through that love and the ability to sacrifice — sacrifice of time, sacrifice of place, sacrifice of everything — you have to travel where you don't want to go. You have to see people who you don't want to meet, perhaps. You have to teach people who don't want to be taught. Isn't it? I mean, every cowherd knows that when he herds a bunch of cows, some are running this way, some are running that way, and you have to bring them together and that's a herd. That's what we do here.

So, it means sacrifice at all levels: at the physical level, the mental level, even the spiritual level. The teacher may have to sacrifice his own spiritual practice to help others to practise. It's nice to go sit in a cave and sit in meditation, forgetting the rest of the world. That is all right for the ascetic who wants to evolve, and devil take the rest of the world. But here, no. The Devil may take me, but you all must reach God. That is what charity means.

Kevin: I suppose we should ask, "What is meditation?" There seem to be an awful lot of descriptions. Is it like prayer?

PR: Simply put, meditation is to think of one thing continuously. My Master used to say we're all meditating. Somebody is meditating on success, somebody on power, somebody on his girlfriend, and according to the old truth, we get what we meditate upon, or we become what we meditate upon. Here, we meditate upon what we call the Divine illumination in our heart. God, not having a form or a name or an attribute in true spirituality, there cannot be meditation on the form of God. It has to be abstract.

Kevin: So, you're saying that, basically, what fills our thoughts is what we get.

PR: Yes.

Kevin: What are some of the benefits of meditation?

PR: Again, I must say there are no benefits. There is nothing to **get** here. It is to **become** something. By continuously thinking of something, we become whatever the thought is. If I am afraid, my body begins to shake, my tongue becomes dry. It is fear which comes first. The body reaction comes later. If I am happy I am balanced, I have nothing to complain about, I am at peace with myself and with the rest of the world.

Kevin: Can I expect to see some changes, though, as a result of meditating regularly?

PR: Almost instantly, yes.

Kevin: Would it be different, for example, if I was driving my car home from work and I got cut off the road, would I react any differently?

PR: You would sit peacefully until the traffic clears, for instance, instead of sweating and swearing.

Kevin: Oh, that might not be bad.

PR: Well, you know, people think they are in control of themselves and their situation. It is a fallacy. First of

all, if you are in control of yourself, you should never lose your temper; you should never lose your what they call 'cool' in America. Now, how can I do something of which I am in control? If I have my dog on a leash, it cannot run away from me. Isn't it?

So, meditation helps us, not to control ourselves, but to give us the ability to regulate all our functions. My Master used to say that we are the slaves of the mind, because the mind is what is really motivating us. Instead, we have to master the mind. Now, when we master the mind, the mind becomes an extraordinarily useful instrument for our evolution. It is through the mind that we have to evolve, thinking that God exists. A mindless person has no God; he has no Devil. He has nothing. So, the mind is essential.

Kevin: So, better control may not be what's happening if we meditate regularly. It may be that we're in, perhaps, better balance?

PR: It regulates and brings you first to a normal stage, which is what you call balance. Balance between what? You know that the term 'balance' can be misinterpreted as the number of times I am angry and the number of times I am not angry. "I'm balanced today, Chari, because I lost my temper thrice and I kept it thrice." It's not like that. Balance means I am neither angry nor not angry. I am neither peaceful, nor in a state of un-peace. I am sort of delicately poised between two conditions. The benefit that gives is, I can slip into either side by choice. Such a person can **appear** to become angry, but he is not angry. He puts on a show of being angry because it is necessary to be like that.

It is like the very famous story of a snake which was the disciple of a saint in India. It became addicted to what we call *ahimsa* — non-violence. A few years later, the saint was walking along and he saw the snake almost lying dead, and even kids were throwing stones at it. And he asked, "What has happened to you? You are my disciple, isn't it?" The snake said, "Yes, boss. But you told me non-violence. Look what has happened to me." So the guru said, "You are stupid! I told you not to bite, but I never told you not to hiss!"

So you see, we control ourselves to this extent, that without being angry, we may appear to be angry according to the need of the moment. But **inside** it is always in a state of equilibrium, at peace.

Marsha: How does one meditate?

PR: We close our eyes and sit in a comfortable position which we can hold for a stated period. In our system it is one hour at a time. The idea being that, during meditation, the body should not interfere. If it does — if you need to change position, just change position, and the meditation continues. We fix the mind on this thought, that there is Divine light in the heart, and try to hold it there, because meditation means thinking continuously about one thing. If the mind wanders, gently bring it back, because if you try to fight it, it fights back. Action and reaction. Even in science, you have this concept that action and reaction are always equal and opposite. So, we don't fight. We gently draw it back to the subject.

By doing this day after day after day, a stage comes when you just close your eyes and you are in meditation. You are no longer having to meditate as an activity. Meditation becomes the inner state of the mind — the heart. Then it becomes difficult to open the eyes and come out into this mundane world. That takes an effort now. It is strange, but advanced students of yoga know that the difficulty they have in slipping into meditation is far less that the difficulty they will have later in slipping out of meditation to confront the duties of this world. And that is a wonderful situation. All that you have to do is shake yourself awake, sort of, come down to this level of existence, do what has to be done, and slip back into your Self.

Marsha: How does meditation help us progress in spirituality?

PR: Well, when I have one thought in my mind — you know, the mind is capable of only one thought at a time. We cannot think of two things at a time. Now, the problem of worries is that the mind keeps jumping from thought to thought, fear to fear, possibility to possibility, darkness to darkness — all these funny things. The first training is to hold the mind to one thought. This gives us the ability to regulate the mind. Very much like if you are a laser surgeon and you have to keep the laser beam at one spot, you can't allow the laser to go around; you would be cutting away everything that should not be cut away.

So, the mind is trained to be on one subject for as long as I wish it to be there. It is one hour initially, but it takes some time to get to that one hour. This means we need the ability to concentrate, because when I can keep my mind on one subject, it is concentration. And in spirituality we say, "Concentration is the instrument of revelation." That is, on any mundane subject pertaining to the material world, I need to concentrate to know all about it. I need to concentrate on my studies, on my job, on driving the car. This capacity comes. But God cannot be an instrument of revelation, because there is nothing to be revealed. There is no form, no name, no attributes. So, meditation cannot be, **by itself**, something which can reveal God to me.

Meditation is only something to regulate the mind, for me to become the master of my mind. Then we have other things, like I said, love for God. When this condition is created in me that I am able to concentrate, and I think of God with love, I can feel His presence. He who is everywhere, omnipresent, why should I seek Him in certain specific places or in specific times? It seems absurd. Like, you know, I have to go to the top of the mountain to be able to breathe. If I don't breathe here, how am I going to get there to breathe? So, if I don't have God here with me, how am I going to go to some place where there is God? Because without God, I cannot even **exist** at all.

Marsha: So, clearly, if God is everywhere, He is with me.

PR: He is **in** me. So, spirituality says, "Seek Him inside yourself." Because He is the prime mover which is moving you. He is the source of everything that you are. And you are seeking Him outside when you should be seeking Him inside. He cannot be outside, for the simple reason that He cannot be separate from His creation. You understand?

Spirituality says, He is everywhere. He is at all times — not only in the past, revealing Himself to a prophet three thousand years ago, revealing Himself to another prophet two thousand years ago, revealing Himself to another prophet nine hundred years ago. You understand? And then **that** is the God of that religion. And then you must worship that God through **that** religion to get to God.

Now, God cannot be the, what shall we say, the possession of any particular religion or race. He is universal. How can He belong only to the adherents to one religion, or the worshipers of one religion? He is available to **all** — not even available, He **is** there in everybody, in everything.

In spirituality, that is why we said we have to transcend religion. Religion not only imprisons us into certain concepts through fear and temptation (fear of hell and temptation for heaven); it also imprisons God within its own walls, whether of a church or a temple or a monastery. In spirituality, if I may make bold to say so — you know, some people may say it is a blasphemy — we not only liberate ourselves, we liberate God, too, from this bondage, that has turned into religion. How do you like that idea?

Marsha: I like that very much. I understand that your system of meditation involves something called 'transmission' and a term which you refer to as 'cleaning'. Could you describe those briefly, please?

PR: Yes. Cleaning is very essential. You see, we believe that by thinking again and again of something, it leaves an impression. Suppose I admire this flower here. It creates an impression. I look at it again; it deepens my impression. Then I want to take it home — third impression. That night I may dream of roses, for all I know, because the impression is so deep. I see an accident on the road, a gory accident, bodies on the street, sirens blaring, blood on the tarmac — an enormous impression is created. I cannot sleep for nights. So, these impressions are very real. My thought, my action. Now, thought is the mother of action. Without thinking, we cannot do anything. We have to think first, and then do.

Yoga says, start regulating the mind, and then the activities will automatically be regulated, because thought is the source. It's like damming a river at the source. You don't dam it at the sea line, at the shoreline, for instance. Everything has to be regulated at its source. So, that is number one point, you see, that I have to go to the source of my human situation. I won't call it difficulties or pleasures, because in spirituality they are both the same in the sense that, depending on the impressions that I created, they re-create in me another life of the same sort. It is like going to Pizza Hut today, going to Pizza Hut again tomorrow, ordering the same pizza, and we get fixed to that one pizza. We never eat a second pizza. Same pizza in the same Pizza Hut wherever we go — impression. If we go to Cairo, we say, "Oh, but Chari, is there no Pizza Hut here?" No. That man is sad. He says, "Oh, you know, honey, we should have had our holiday in the States. We made a mistake coming out to Cairo." You see how these things imprison us.

So, in cleaning, what we do is the practice of the system. Sit as if you are sitting for meditation. Imagine that the love of the Master is flowing through you and removing all these impressions created during the day. Therefore, it is best done at the end of the day when all our activities are over, normal activities are over. This takes care of the daily impressions. You have to apply your will. Imagine as if it is all going out like that. It works. What about the deeper samskaras which you have formed? When these impressions harden into some solid state — I mean, it is not really solid, but we have to use the word because there is nothing else to use — they assume a solidity with which we are not competent to deal ourselves. Then we require again this fellow we call the guide. He is able to clean what we cannot clean ourselves.

Marsha: How?

PR: Using his power, which we are using also when we think his power is going through us. And when these are removed, in a sense, an inner vacuum is created into which the Divine energy is now able to flow. That is the true idea of spirituality. And how does this flow? It is a flow from the teacher to the taught. He is able to transmit his spiritual attainments into us.

So, we have the three elements of meditation, cleaning, and transmission. Meditation is important to get regulatory control over our minds so that we can concentrate, so that we can deal with our work effectively. Not superlatively, not successfully, but effectively. Cleaning is necessary to remove the samskaras, as we call them, the grossness, which create for us the nauseatingly repetitive pattern of existence, day after day after day. That's why people say, "Oh for heaven's sake. One more day!" The same routine, the same drudgery. No choice! We have created it. When we remove all this the heart is vacuumised, and the Divine energies flow through the process of transmission. And for this, we have people who are trained to do it who are called preceptors. They are available throughout the world.

Kevin: At the beginning of our program we raised some important questions, and we'd like to return to them now. Most of us feel that something is out of balance in this country. What is it that we, as Americans, must change to bring spirituality into our lives?

PR: Well, I would not like to pinpoint America or Americans, because this question applies to the whole world today. The imbalance is precisely because we have thrown away the spiritual values and have embraced only the material values. Spirituality says we are born, we are in a body, we are living in a material world. Therefore the material world cannot be thrown off.

Kevin: So instead of thinking about Pizza Hut, we should be thinking about something higher.

PR: Well, think of the pizza in your kitchen, for instance. But the truth is, I **need** a material life. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here. So, the material life has to be attended to absolutely correctly, effectively. At the same time, we must bring back into our lives the spiritual values of life which we have lost. As my Master used to say, it is like a bird flying with one wing. It cannot fly. It falls.

So, as a bird flies on two wings, the human being has to exist both materially and spiritually simultaneously. Religion makes this mistake of thinking that you can be either in the church, as dedicated priests, nuns, serving the church, serving the community, or being the lay disciples, the lay following of the church who are there to be helped. Spirituality says no. You need help only initially in restoring this balance by being introduced to meditation, through which you learn to regulate your mind, through which you learn to clean off all the samskaras, which automatically modify your thoughts and actions as you go on and on. We don't say, "You must think pure thoughts." We come to a state where there **is** no such thing as impure thought or pure thought. The thought is what it must be at that moment. The action is what it must be at that moment. And so we bring, what I would hazard saying, God back into our lives. At the moment, we have only churches and temples, but not God. In spirituality we have God, but no churches and temples.

Kevin: If we meditate, how could we improve the environment, political instability, addictions, family disintegration, and violence in America? Let's do this in fifty words or less, okay? [laughter] We're just people, and the problems seem very large to us.

PR: Well, Christ was a human being. He didn't say we're just people. He did something about it. Buddha was a human being. So was Krishna, so was Rama, so was Mohammed the Prophet. So, what made them what they are, or what they were, or what they became? The act of meditation. Tradition says they all meditated. Christ went and meditated. Buddha went and meditated. Mohammed the Prophet went and meditated. Isn't it? And through one man changing, they were able to change society, not for the day or for the year, but for centuries. Why not we all try that experiment? It is ridiculous to think, as religion thinks, that there can only be one prophet. It is like a society saying there can be only one father. Every male can be a father, every female can be a mother.

And all males and females can be Divine — divinised to the level where they are almost God. They cannot be God because God is always only one. But nothing prevents us from being **like** God. Like your son will look like you. He will resemble you. They will say, "Oh, he is a clone of Kevin Kirby." He looks as if he is a clone. Or the daughter looks like the mother. Genetics has so many answers to give. Their traits are passed on, and things like that. That is society's explanation for a material resemblance. The spiritual resemblance grows through divinising our inner selves, and not resembling, but **being**. A resemblance is only a reflection of something. It is not **it**. Like I can paint perhaps something like Cezanne, but it is not Cezanne's painting, and it would not sell for seven million dollars. Isn't it? But instead of **looking like** my father in heaven, I can become **like** my father in heaven. Which would you like to be? To look like or to become?

Kevin: Well, I think we're all looking for something more than surface.

PR: And now, if this message is passed on: that there need not be only one prophet; that every human being can practice this, have his balance be restored so that there is both the Divine and the material planes of existence simultaneously present in him, with equal attention to both — their thoughts are modified; their desires are modified; their actions are modified. A spirit of brotherliness comes, because now there is no more national patriotism, there is no more religious affiliation, as I said. We become one.

Marsha: Just a minute ago you pointed out that if one person like Jesus or Buddha meditated, it changed the world. If many people meditate today, is that also an even greater change that's possible?

PR: Well, in a sense. You see, the idea of change as greater and lesser is a wrong idea. Like the concept of infinity in mathematics — if you add something to infinity, it still remains infinity. Even infinity plus infinity is still infinity. So, by divinising increasing numbers of the population, we don't add to God's status or powers or mercy, or anything like that. But we certainly add to our Selves. And as our Self — the inner Self — becomes more and more manifest, instead of being a nation of human beings, we become a nation of divinised human beings, we become a world of divinised human beings. In a sense, the whole world is transformed. And if this world is transformed, well, Christ can say, "Not a leaf falls but that it shall not touch God," or something like that. If a whole world is transformed into a world of divinised human beings, don't you think it will affect the whole universe?

Marsha: It seems to me it must have a profound effect.

PR: It will have an enormously profound effect. We cannot even imagine the effect it will have. Imagine one person being divinised and so much has changed. His teachings are being studied, his books are being read, three thousand years after the person passed away. And if every one of us were to become like him — you know the old saying that, "In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." If all of us could have eyesight, what would happen to that kingdom?

So, this is not something which is a multiplied effect. It is a total change of, shall we say, level of being, going into another dimension altogether.

Kevin: If I were to bring this down to the level of my family, and my own concern about my family's spiritual development, myself and my children, is meditation something that my whole family can be doing together?

PR: Yes, and we should do it. You see, to use a small example, in a dark room with a hundred people in it, you put on the light and all are illuminated. So, if one person is meditating in a family, correctly, effectively, it should automatically, sort of, infiltrate into their hearts. Like a woman who is carrying a baby not yet born. It derives its spiritual sustenance from the mother as well as the physical sustenance. Now, in science and in common knowledge, we only think of the material sustenance it takes from the mother through the umbilical cord, which we cut when the child has come out of the mother. But we don't think of the spiritual values that the mother can give. Heredity speaks of so many things, like the length of the nose, the colour of the eyes, etc. What about the **spiritual** inheritance that we should have?

Therefore, we believe that parentage should be entered into only after there is a certain spiritual practice into which you have already been inculcated and to which we become wedded, as it were. We believe that such parents will produce children who are already on a higher level of evolution. They will still be delivered as human beings, but at a higher level of spiritual evolution. And there are stories galore in all the traditions, whether it is Islam or Hindu or Buddhist or Christian, of such children being born. I think the primary story in relation to this in a Christian background is the birth of Christ himself — the immaculate conception.

So you see, we have a lot to do. If one saint in the whole world can transform that world, cannot a person who is going toward that saintliness transform his family? Bearing in mind what our system says about keeping the material and spiritual lives in balance: no asceticism, but no license. Food, when we are hungry. All appetites at the right time in the right place under the right circumstances. Money, piously earned. Food, piously cooked. You know, people say, "Well, you know, proteins, carbohydrates, minerals, etc." But spirituality says, if you eat it in the remembrance of God, that food becomes transformed. No chemist can explain this, but it happens.

Kevin: Would you care to make a prediction about the spiritual future of the United States?

PR: Of the United States? Well, when we started our work here some twenty-two years ago, there was a great deal of resistance. We had probably twenty people practising the particular form of meditation that we have been talking about. Today it is close to one thousand people. Twenty-two years. But you know, there comes a point when it will grow exponentially, like everything in this world.

You know, I am also addicted to science fiction and also to science **as** fiction! What I call science **as** fiction are all these theories about the Big Bang and whatnot, where there was supposed to have been a primeval atom which had no existence in space because it had no dimension of length, breadth, and height. It was a dimensionless point, what science calls a singularity into which this whole universe was supposed to have been compressed. It explodes. Called the Big Bang. And in the first period, which is ten to the power of minus thirty-two seconds, the universe achieved almost its present dimension. Now can you imagine a time span of ten to the power of minus thirty-two seconds or forty seconds, whatever it is? If that is possible, why not in my heart a seed is put into me my by my Master in the form of his transmission and it explodes, and a new universe is created in me? As above, so below. And the human being is supposed to be something between the absolutely microcosmic and the absolute macro-cosmos — in between. Perhaps this is hell as quoted in religion, and that's heaven. Because everything to be compressed into a dimensionless point and of infinite gravity, is hell. And a total expansion, filling the whole universe as it were, at peace — I am the universe myself — could be the idea of heaven.

So you see, juggling with this science **as** fiction, science fiction, and fiction as religion, and religious fiction, I am able to blend all these things into a form where science becomes religion, religion becomes science, and spirituality embraces both. Because, after all, human beings create these concepts. An animal does not know of God or hell or heaven. We know. Why? Because we have created these concepts which we need to sustain ourselves. A criminal needs a God who is compassionate, who is merciful. A poor man needs a God who is rich, who can give him everything that he wants. A sick man needs a God who will cure him. For him, his God, perhaps, is the ultimate doctor. Therefore, in Hinduism we have this pantheon of gods: God as wealth, God as power, God as knowledge. But it is silly to say that the Hindus don't know. You know, in one of the famous translations of the Vedas, one German translator says the Hindus are stupid because they have so many gods. Not at all. We see God in so many ways. The lover looks upon God as a friend who will unite him with his beloved — God of love, *kama sutra*.

So, God is very much what I think He is, at this moment. That's why I said that as we evolve spiritually, God seems to have a different dimension, in my understanding, in my experience. Therefore, at the peak of my spiritual evolution only, will I be able to understand, to appreciate, to experience God as He is.

Kevin: I wish my brain would expand enough to be able to understand this!

PR: [laughing] Well, you know, in spirituality we say it's not the brain so much as the heart which has to expand. Because the brain is only an instrument, like a computer, in which you feed in information and take out information. It is the heart which is really to open and expand, before these prejudices separating religions, separating peoples, are to be overcome. Therefore my Master used to say, "Think with the heart," not to think with the head. The head thinks whether we like it or not! With this [points to heart], we have to learn to think. And when we have done that, we are halfway to the spiritual goal of realisation.

Marsha: Chari, thank you very much for sharing your information, your wealth of experience and knowledge with us today. I think we've all learned a great deal and we're very appreciative.

PR: I am grateful to you for inviting me to speak with you, to exchange what I have. And I must assure you that I love America and the Americans. For me, there is no such thing as 'America is great'. You know, people always say, "America is great," "India is great," "Pakistan is great." It is not the **country** which is great. The **people** of the country make the land great. Therefore, spirituality is targeted towards the people of the country, not towards the country itself. I am grateful to all Americans, especially the Americans we have here with us, for giving me this opportunity to expose some facts of the spirituality that I have learned from my Master.

Thank you very much.

ADDRESS TO SRCM USA ANNUAL MEETING

Molena, Georgia, USA
9 September, 1994

First of all, I would like to congratulate our management team for their good performance. Secondly, I would like to thank all of you for your co-operation, because without that, the management team can do nothing. I hope your co-operation will continue and increase. Thirdly, a piece of good but rather premature information. I am trying to unfold a plan for the Mission's celebration of the Golden Jubilee next year [applause] because the Mission completes fifty years. Of course, Basant and Babuji's birthdays will be celebrated in India (they cannot be otherwise), but we are contemplating having a big celebration here in Atlanta, [applause] in which all outside India will participate. That is, Europe, North America, Australians, Malaysians, Chinese, Japanese, whatever.

We have to necessarily have our meditation hall in place. It has to have a seating capacity of about two thousand abhyasis at least. That is what we expect as a minimum participation. In any case, looking to the growth of the Mission here, optimistically we can hope for two thousand (say, in 1996) Americans. So, this is only a preview of what is going to happen in the future. We have to make plans to build that meditation hall, upgrade our sewage facilities, sanitation, things like that. But unfortunately in this world, especially in modern America, nothing is possible without money. You know that.

It is difficult to have to keep referring to this aspect of the Mission's function, because in some way, you know, to me it is personally distasteful to talk of money. We should reach a stage where we can have, for instance, all abhyasis coming and eating without paying for it — the minimum, you see. That was Babuji's dream and it is still remaining a dream. But obviously we cannot feed people free of cost unless we have created a sufficient reserve from which the interest alone will pay for all our expenses on food and the basic amenities.

So, we are trying to create a reserve fund, but I am afraid that in a country where the interest rates are between five and six percent, we need millions of dollars before we can do that. You know I am an Indian, and to me a million is a big figure, but I am sure for Americans, who deal in billions, a million is not a big sum by any means. All that it means is knocking off a couple of zeroes and I take a check, and there you have a check for ten thousand dollars! See? It's only two zeroes less than a million, isn't it!

So, we have to somehow make abhyasis appreciate this point, that to create material facilities, money is essential. People often ask me, "In the days of Patanjali, did we have ashrams?" Yes, of course we had ashrams. They were like the ashram you have all seen in Manapakkam — wooden pillars and coconut thatch on the roof. In those days it was possible. But even in those days that was expensive. You know, like thirty years ago, if you were earning five hundred dollars, today you are earning five thousand dollars, or maybe fifty thousand dollars. It is only an index of inflation, that the more we earn, the more it reflects the 'inflammationary' tendencies in the country. (Inflationary, I'm sorry. Inflammatory plus inflationary — the two things put together is 'inflammationary', I think!) So you see, inflation plays havoc with our planning.

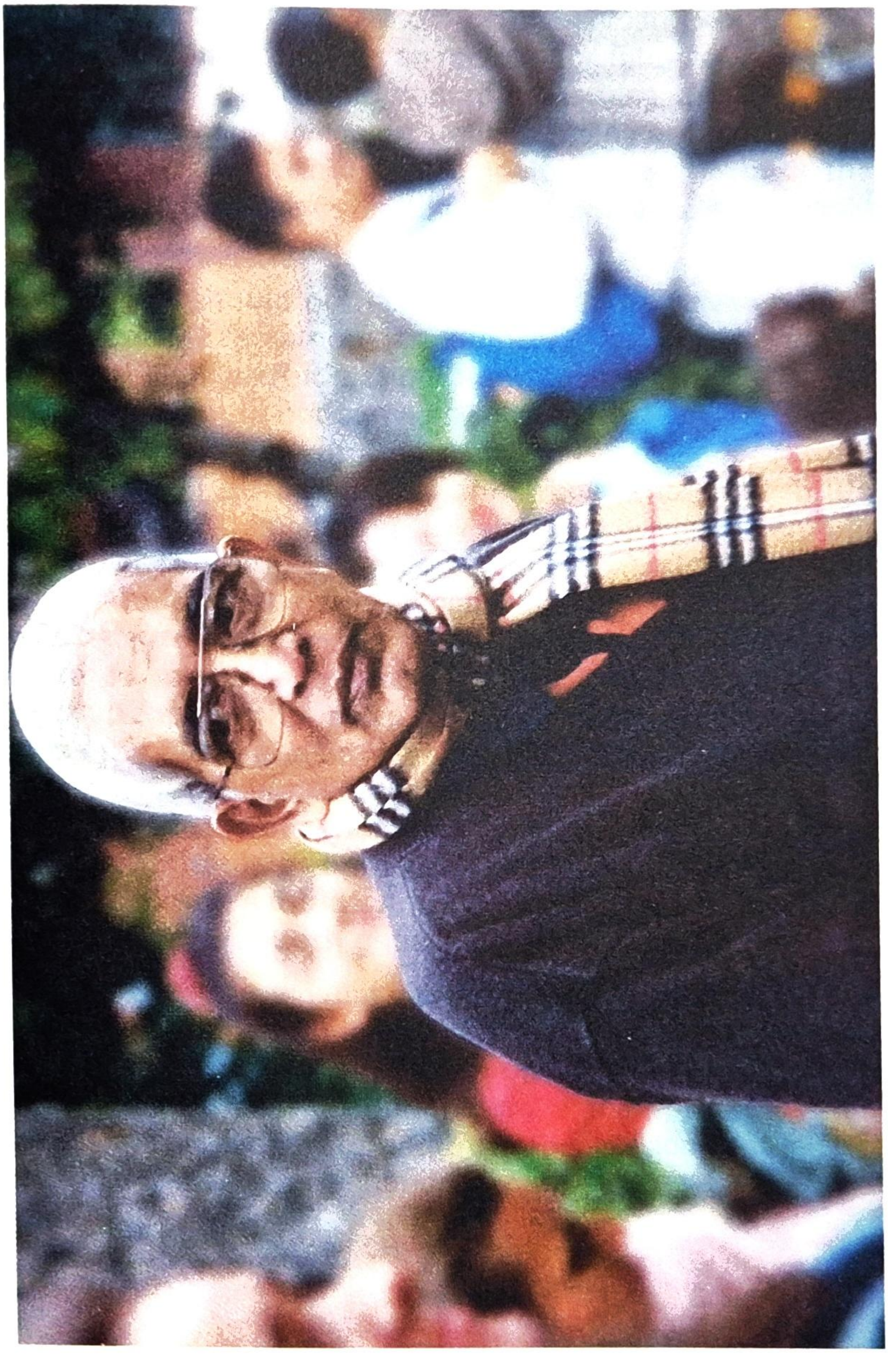
I am told by our experts that this meditation hall will probably require $200,000 to seat 2,000 people. So, like Patanjali's times, his *pathashala*, as we used to call it, meditation halls made of just thatch and bamboo — it was expensive for Patanjali. This is expensive for us. We have to create parking facilities. You know, if two thousand people are coming here, in America each one drives one car! So, often we require more parking space than accommodations for sleeping.

So please, you know, you are the general assembly of the Mission here. This is actually a problem which every one of you should contemplate and think of a possible solution. All of you are educated. All of you understand that the Mission is trying to serve you to the best of its capacity, and the best of the capacity does not mean what it is today. This capacity has to be enhanced day to day, year to year. And **that**, you have to create. In a sense, when we create these facilities it is **you** who are creating it. We are not creating anything. I am only coming and going, you see. I am a visitor. You people of America, from whichever nation you may come, you citizens of this country, you create for your benefit where you may profit by coming to meditate, having a period of retreat.

So you see, it is really for our American public here, our general body, to consider all the aspects of the future needs of the Mission which is going to serve you. In effect, you have to plan how you wish to be served. So the ball is, very correctly, in your court. You want it; you have it. You don't want it; you don't have it.

So, I don't want to make any appeals for funds and things like that. You know, they raised a rather distasteful subject when I was coming in: that almost a hundred people still owe money to the Mission for the period of their stay here now. Things like this upset me. Why should I be involved in this problem? It is your problem. It is your Mission. It is your money. So, instead of 'my Master, my Mission, my method', 'your Master, your Mission, your method'!

So, I suggest you deal with this in an adult fashion, without becoming emotional about it or stupidly critical about it, saying, "Oh, spirituality should not need money." It **does** need money. If we did not have this tent we would not be meditating. It had been raining for the first two or three days.



So, I request all of you as members of the general body of this Mission to consider the future. Put in suggestions to Bill Waycott or to Santosh (who is your secretary) how best we can redeem the future of humanity from the present condition to something that must be glorious beyond even our understanding or imagination. Every one of you must participate in the growth of the Mission, in how things should be built, what facilities should be created.

We should not just come here as consumers. The Americans are famous consumers. This is a consumer nation. That attitude should not come into the Mission. Here, we should not come as consumers. Here, we should come as builders who build for the future — our future, and for the future of the children who are here, the future members of this Mission. I wish they were old enough to sign our register, but unfortunately that is not possible. Nevertheless, their presence here indicates that there will be future needs which you gentlemen and ladies will have to meet. It is **your** problem, in **your** country, for **your** people — not mine. I only come and sit down here, close my eyes, and have a period of comfortable relaxation for an hour or so [laughter] and then I go away! It's as easy as that. But remember, American people, people of America, that it is your future, your children's future, your grandchildren's future. And I pray that it may be the future up to the seventieth generation from today.

So, that is what we are talking about, that is what we are thinking about, that is what we should be planning for. And I pray that all of you will have the correct appreciation of what Sahaj Marg is about, what it is for, and try to co-operate and build this Mission as it should be fifty years hence, hundred years hence.

Thank you.

VII

Australia

November, 1994

ACCEPT MYSELF, CHANGE MYSELF

Sydney, Australia

12 November, 1994

When you think of Australia and India, that this is a part of the Commonwealth and this is the Republic, we create division. As my Master used to say, "God did not create Australia. God did not create India — He created." **We** are dividing it into bits and pieces. And whenever you divide what is whole into parts, there is always a bit of trauma in it — a feeling of separation, a feeling of loneliness. Like we have a family, and one of the family goes away and you think, "Oh, he has gone and I am here." But suppose someone has the misfortune to have an attack of amnesia, for instance. The brother may be right in front of you but you don't know he is a brother. Your father may be in front of you but you don't know he is your father. All you need is to erase your memory and everything is gone. You don't know you're in Australia; you say, "What is Australia?"

So you see, this business of remembering is very important. You have no brother unless you remember it. Isn't it? You forget him and he is gone. Like computers — a false move and everything is gone; then you have to feed the information in again. Now, if you don't restrict this business of brother and sister to a physical family, we are all brothers and sisters. Here again the isolationism is on our part: "My brother is only one who is born to my mother." Because we share a common parentage, we have brothers. But what about our sharing a common **human** heritage? We are all human beings. Should we not feel a greater sense of brotherhood? That instead of having a small family, of two brothers and a sister and a mother and a father, for me now the whole world is peopled with brothers and sisters and therefore I can be fearless wherever I go, I can find joy and happiness wherever I go, I can find love wherever I go. Not because love has any special attribute, but because once you accept this fact of a human brotherhood, it does create love. Then you don't have to remember individually. "This is my brother. This is my sister." Everyone is brother and sister. Then we get out of so many of these human frailties like selfishness and fear of each other, shyness.

Yesterday somebody told me, "People here are afraid to meet you." I said, "Why on earth should anybody be afraid of meeting me when they don't even know me yet?" It's like a person who is afraid of a tiger who has never seen a tiger before, or a snake when you have never seen a snake before. And the most stupid fear is the fear of the Devil, whom we have never seen and whom we shall probably never see. He doesn't exist.

So, we are giving life to things we have never seen, we have never known, we have never felt, and say, "Oh, but I am afraid." And I said, "Well, **I** should feel afraid because I am jumping into a den of lions here." Any one of you could do something which I could be afraid of. Somebody could punch me in the nose. Somebody could call me a stupid Indian, which I am. Somebody could say something else: "Why the hell does this blighter come all the way to disturb us, to drag us out of our world," etc. — resent the need to be here, resent the need to listen to all this blah-blah about remembrance and Sahaj Marg, etc. It's really silly, you know, because for me, I need to talk about it when it is something other than myself. Just take a small example: suppose I ask him to stand up and say, "Say something about yourself." He cannot really speak about himself. He can only speak about qualities; he can only speak about physical things. "I am six feet tall. I am white. I am Australian. I love wallabies." But what are **you**? I want you to speak about your Self. He won't be able to say a word because he doesn't know anything about his Self yet.

So, nobody can speak about himself or herself unless that Self has been awakened in you and you can guess, "By Jove, I **do** have a Self!" Now we can speak about that Self. It has no form. It has no name. It has no attributes. How would you describe it? "I am happy." How can I describe my happiness? If I am happy because I ate ice cream I can tell you, "Yes, I am happy because I ate ice cream," or, "somebody gave me something," or, "because the weather is nice," or perhaps even, "because I am going away in a couple of days." Isn't it? But when I am happy in myself, by myself, with myself, how will I explain that happiness to you? Except to say, "Try it." And, how can I be happy by myself, with myself, in myself, not dependent on anything outside me? It can happen only when I have gone into myself, found a Self there within me who is now enough for me. He is everything. I don't need to go out of my Self. This Self within me is 'me' in a sense, and not 'me' in another sense. These two senses have to be integrated, that he is 'me' and not 'me' — both have to go. He is neither 'me' nor 'not me'. If you look at it one way, he is 'me'. If you look at it another way, he couldn't possibly be 'me'.

When I begin to cultivate this relationship with the Ultimate brother who is within me all the time, who is my companion forever, who is with me under all situations — of danger, of peace, of war, of sorrow, of misery, of shame, of faith — I begin to appreciate that here is somebody who is eternally with me, who doesn't judge me, who doesn't criticise, but whom I have been criticising all my life as something external to myself — a God whom I don't know, a God whom I am afraid of, a God who I hate sometimes — and then I realise how unfair I have been to Him who is within me, precisely because I project Him outside and create a God who doesn't exist at all.

So, the secret of existence is to know that God is within me. I don't have to seek Him outside. Don't call Him 'God'. Call Him your elder brother. Call Him your Self — with a capital 'S'. Then you will find that you don't need to go out of yourself to look for satisfaction, peace, love, contentment, because it is all right there. Then comes this marvellous transformation, you see, that when it is all there and it is infinite and eternal, because He has been with you even through this life, however sordid it might have been, however noble it might have been — it doesn't make any difference to Him — then you begin to reflect these qualities. We stop judging; we stop criticising, because that which is in me is within you, too.

So, true brotherhood can come out of a recognition of the fact that inside, in our Selves, we are all the same. It is only the covering that is different. You know, you can buy the same thing and wrap it up in different coloured gift paper, like you give the children at Christmas time. Whatever may be the content, you like to make the package as attractive as possible so that the child grabs it. So, here we have different packings around us. Some very nice, some not so nice, but these are **our** ideas of good and bad. Somebody says, "White is beautiful," somebody says, "Black is beautiful," somebody says, "Grey is beautiful," somebody says, "Tall is beautiful," somebody says, "Short is beautiful." So, what is really beautiful? Because again, this is a purely human idea. If God created this world and this universe and everything in it, I can't see how something can be ugly and something can be beautiful. Like Australia and India, ideas of beauty and ugliness are our creations. I have seen people in Africa, you know, beautiful, bronze, tall, with a bearing like a queen, and they say, "The white people, they are unattractive — they have no colour."

It is just a matter of what you are used to or what you are conditioned to think. Suppose from childhood you are told that the white races are the most brilliant. You become a racist, like in South Africa we have this apartheid. Thank heavens it is gone! Or a dictatorship, where they are told, "This form of government is the best for you," as happened in the USSR. Thank heavens that, too, is gone. Or like in France, where they are always talking of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and they have none of these things! They never had these things. They never had liberty. They never had equality. They never had fraternity. Even today they don't have it. It's a myth, and to celebrate that myth they need a lot of fireworks, they must celebrate the day of the Bastille, they must celebrate the murder of a poor innocent queen. You see how many lies we are perpetrating all the time to prove that, "I am great," "My nation is great," etc. The Germans with their racial superiority, which made them murder millions of Jews — the Aryan race.

So we see again, ideas of inferiority and superiority are **our** creation. There is no such thing as inferiority and superiority. No human being can be superior to another human being. But, when we evolve to recognise that which is my Self, to accept that which is within myself as the true 'myself', then we find that all these externals drop off. That which is inside is what matters, and in that there is no difference between us. Therefore, in spirituality we have no divisive tendencies, no hatred for others, and if these negatives don't go first, the positives cannot come into being. I cannot love unless hatred is removed. My Master said that beautifully. He said, "What is all this problem of loving? Just remove hatred and love is there."

That is true of everything. Remove disease and health is there. We don't create health; health is normal to us. Remove foolishness and wisdom is there. We are born wise, we are born healthy, we are born wealthy — there is no question about this. I don't mean 'wealthy' in terms of dollars, but with a wealth that is within me — a wealth of capacity, a wealth of possibilities, which can make me create anything in this universe, including the universe itself. Because it is a very real and a very true thing to say that we each create our own universe. There is no such thing as a single universe outside of us. Each one of you has a different universe, a different world. Some are living in a world of dreams. Some are living in a world of fantasies. Some are trying to live, and not really living yet. So, to say there is one universe out there, is as nonsensical to say as there is only one human being.

Now, when can we inhabit, all of us, the same universe? When we all have the same universe within us. Therefore, spirituality says the external universe, however vast, however enormous, is yet limited. Even mathematics or physics defines the universe as some sort of a finite infinity — which is absurd! It is playing with words — 'finite infinity'. How can infinity be finite or how can the finite be infinite? But, even accepting that it is a finite infinity, inside me is an infinity which is infinitely infinite — no more nonsense of 'finite infinities', but infinite infinities. Inside you is the **true** universe, and if that universe is full of fear and lack of faith and lack of love, I find the outside universe a faithless universe, a universe without love, a universe without faith, because we project outside what is within. You see in the mirror your own face. You cannot see anything else. Nobody has ever seen another face in the mirror except his or her own. Isn't it?

So, we see the universe in the way we see it because that is all that we **can** see, and that is all we will continue to see for as long as we are what we are today. The universe changes when I change. But foolish people — you know, educated foolish people, people with degrees, doctorates, whatnot — try to change the universe, and then say, "I have changed it." Impossible. You cannot change a blade of grass.

So, spiritual wisdom says, please change yourself. Create in you all that you are seeking from outside, and then you will find that the outside has become what you are inside. Therefore, saints don't see misery outside. They don't see lack of love outside. They don't see lack of faith outside. They say, "This is a beautiful universe. It is God's kingdom. He created this. It is wonderful beyond imagination." And then along comes one of us and says, "Swamiji," (or Master or Guruji) "How can it be so? I see it differently." He says, "You see differently because you have not yet learned to see in yourself all that is there — the wealth of the universe itself, every possibility in the universe exists within you. Every time through which the universe is going to pass is within you. Eternity, which you think of as outside, is within you. The eternal, which you think of as God, is within you."

Then we understand that eternal life does not mean continuous life prolonging into an infinity of time. Eternal means to rise beyond time, beyond the ideas of a beginning and an end. In fact, time is born out of eternity. Then we can be fearless. We can have faith. We can afford to jump into a den of lions knowing that, after all, what can they do? They can growl at you, roar at you, and you throw a stick at them and they run away. I saw this in a lion park in Johannesburg. A fellow in a tractor-trailer was going along and six lions were following him. He jumped off the trailer, took a piece of stone and threw it at the lions and they vanished. Imagine, you know — Simba. And we talk of lions and their pride — the only pride they lose there (you know, the lion and its pride!).

So, we should not have that sort of pride. "I have so many things." "I have so many friends." I have one friend, but He is everything. I have one love, but that love is everything. I have one faithful companion, and He is it. Why? He is inseparable from me. He has bound himself within me, not letting me go from the dawn of time, and will go on to infinity. And when I have such a one — here outside, it is fickle; today's friend is tomorrow's enemy; tomorrow's enemy is day-before-yesterday's friend. Fickleness, temporary — nothing lasts. But here there is no fickleness. He says, "Whatever you are, whoever you are, whatever you may do, sinful or virtuous, black or white, tall and thin or short and fat — anything, it doesn't matter — I am always there." So, when you need, look here. If you look outside you may find; you may not find. You seek a companion? There is no companion; there is only an exploitation. You want a companion who will be strong? In a moment of danger he runs away.

I remember that story in school, where two friends were walking along and suddenly a bear appeared. One fellow climbed up a tree, and the other fellow just lay down flat on the road and pretended to be dead. The bear came and sniffed at him and went away. Then the other guy came down and said, "What did the bear say?" He said, "Beware of this friend who runs up a tree!" This is friendship. We say, "A friend in need is a friend in deed." Have you ever found a friend when you are in need of one? If you have, you have been lucky. They don't exist, because they come to us when **they** need us. I mean, every time I receive a telephone call, nobody calls me up to say, "Oh, I love you, Chari." Everybody calls me up to say, "Oh, I don't have a job. My wife is sick. My uncle is suffering from terminal cancer. Can you do something, Chari-ji?" (The 'ji' comes afterwards!)

So, what is this business of friendship and giving my life for you and loving you unto eternity and all this stupid nonsense? It's okay, you know, it's a diversion. We lie to each other, but I cannot lie to myself. And that is the problem, because when we come to spirituality and we have to look inside and we see ourselves as we are, we are frightened, we are ashamed, and then we say, "I am happy as I am. Whatever I may be, it doesn't matter. For heaven's sake, don't make me look inside!" But until you do that... A sense of shame is, again, your own idea, your own evaluation of thoughts, acts, deeds, etc. Who said this is shameful, or that is not shameful? You know, I think if you turn away a hungry man because you don't like him, it's honest. But if you pretend to like him and say, "Friend, brother, come in and eat my food," and then curse him for taking away part of your food, that is shameful.

So, we have to learn to be what we are and to accept ourselves as what we are, and what we find is good, even though it may be awful. Why? Because I have created myself by my past actions, my past thoughts. If I have created that, surely I can create something else in the future with myself. You see, what I am, and the acceptance that I am what I am because of what I did with myself, is the greatest proof to me of the possibility of changing myself in the future. If I am what I am, not because of what I did with myself, but because of some external agency, I have no possibility at all of changing myself. For me, it is the ultimate proof that I can change everything that I am to become what I wish to be, because I have done it in the past, and therefore I am here now. If I couldn't change myself, then I cannot change myself — ever.

So, everything which is bad and looks stupid and awful in me is proof that I did it, and it is also proof that if I want, I can do better, and best, and ultimately divinise myself. It is in me. The whole thing is in me, you see. If you can cook badly, nevertheless you have cooked something! The minute you go into a corner in a huddle, and weep, and say, "Oh, my darling, I have cooked this. It has gone bad." — so what? Cook again! Buy some more tomatoes and potatoes, and Mr. Chari will be delighted to eat it, too.

So, what are we ranting and raving about for? About ugly selves and cleaning, and... You know, I never used to clean myself. I never did my evening cleaning. Once Babuji asked me, "Do you do your cleaning?" I said, "No." He said, "Why not?" I said, "I don't find anything dirty in me." I thought he would get very angry, but he was very happy. He said, "This is the attitude I want all abhyasis to develop."

You know, a baby is innocent. It can play in its own urine. In India they do, because we don't bundle them up and keep everything hidden away for six hours, then pat them in the back to find out what is inside and then change the nappies. We are breeding dirty babies, you know, and they get skin trouble. In India it is all very natural, and they play with their own excreta, tapping on it, splashing in it. What does it do — shit and urine — it doesn't do anything. But for us, these are dirty things and they are so dirty that we are ashamed of them, and therefore our toilets have to be sparkling clean. Brushes, special cleaners, blue colour to be put inside, you know?

So, whenever you try to hide away something, then it means you are ashamed of it. But I don't see how evacuating something from inside you is worse than putting something into you through your mouth. If this is dirty, that too is dirty.

I am always fond of that beautiful story where a young boy went to find a guru, and somebody said, "He is the greatest Master." He went to him and the guru said, "Come back to me when you have found the most ugly and dirty thing in this world. I need that as my *guru dakshina*." (*Dakshina* means what you offer to the guru as fees when your training is over.) And this boy searches and searches. "This is useless," and then he finds something worse, and then he finds something worse. One day, he is in the toilet and he says, "Aha! This is the ugliest, dirtiest, filthiest thing because nobody wants to look at it, nobody wants to touch it, nobody wants to smell it." He was about to take up a spoonful of it to take to his prospective guru when a voice came and said, "What do you want to do with me?" He said, "My guru said, 'Find the worst thing in this world,' and I have found it." The voice replied, "Yesterday I was an apple, I was an apricot, I was a pear, a peach, etc., and you, damn fool, touched me and I became this! And you have the cheek to say you have found the worst thing?" Then he became what we call a *jnani* — a knowledgeable man. He went empty-handed to his guru. The guru said, "My son, you are the same fellow who came three years back?" He said, "Yes, Master." "Have you brought me my *guru dakshina*, the worst thing in the world?" He said, "Yes, Master," fell at his feet and said, "I am that."

We create the ugliness in this world. You are only talking of external pollution — pollution of your air and your water and whatnot. What about the **internal** pollution that you have created, of which you are so afraid that you cannot face it? That is what we have to face. Any fool can change the outside air, put in air conditioners, create an ozone layer. Who said ozone layers cannot be replenished? If somebody would give the Nobel Prize I would be prepared to try it! But Nobel Prizes don't go to spiritual people. They go to destructive people. A man named Mr. Alfred Nobel, who created dynamite, which has caused enormous misery in this world. He made so much money that he could fund prizes for all eternity.

And who gets the prizes today? Cloning, gene splicing — all destructive horrors which we are going to face in the coming decades. Never do we ever see a Buddha get a Nobel Prize, or a Christ get a Nobel Prize — or any prize, for that matter. They are generally crucified.

So, if you want to first make your self see your Self in your self, change that self, you have to work on your self. That is what we try to do here. Meditation, cleaning, all this is the same. Why should people be afraid of cleaning when they are not afraid of taking a shower? When you take a shower it is implicit in that act that there is something you want to wash off yourself, but you don't feel dirty. Why, when you sit in spiritual cleaning, should you feel dirty? I don't see any reason for it. And if all the muck I wash off from the outside of my body doesn't bother me, why should the cleaning bother me? Here again, we are bringing a compartmentalised mind and saying, "Oh, but you know, these are inner qualities and I am ashamed of them." If I work in the mud, my hands are muddy. I am not ashamed of the mud on my hands; I just wash them off.

The basic need, if I am to be successful in my spiritual pursuit, is first to have the humility to accept myself as I am, knowing that I am what I am because of all that I did and thought, and in this life the immense possibility that, if I could create **this** which I am now, I can create **that** which I have to be in the future. So remember, grossness within, and the knowledge that it is I who created that grossness, gives me the immense satisfaction and the courage to think, "If I could do this, I could do that, too."

Thank you.

HE IS INSIDE YOU

Sydney, Australia

13 November, 1994

What is so wonderful about surrender? Again, the question is, are we able to surrender to what we should surrender to? Or are we just surrendering to that which we cannot escape from. Our life teaches us — if you would but observe it carefully — that we are always meditating and we are in continued states of surrender, but the two are not aimed at a higher realisation or at a higher achievement in life, an evolutionary way of growth. But through some haphazard, desire fulfilment-oriented life, we have used our powers of meditation and surrender to meditate upon, and surrender to, the wrong objectives.

So, the first step in spirituality is to get into our heads that we are not here to enjoy life. Nobody enjoys life. I mean, even those who **want** to enjoy life and who dedicate their whole life to enjoyment of life, rarely enjoy life. I have known many people who have been enormously rich, who have had everything that could possibly conduce to enjoyment of life — health, wealth, yachts, mountaineering equipment — anything you name, they have. But they are miserable. Why? Precisely because it is as if the inner Self is revolting against the lower self's attitudes to life. It is as if something in me says, "Can it. This is not what we are here for."

So, there is always a tussle between the inner Self and the superficial 'me'. That is why we have problems with our conscience. Conscience, and the prickings of the conscience, is nothing but a dialogue between my higher Self and my lower self. The higher Self says, "Don't," the lower self says, "Do." And because we have acquired so many desires, we succumb to the demand of the lower self. Then we develop feelings of inadequacy, feelings of guilt, feelings of helplessness, because as we progressively succumb we lose our freedom.

It would be very right to say that when we meditate upon lower things and surrender to the lower appetites of life, we go on losing our freedom little by little until we are totally enslaved by these things. There is not God who puts us in prison. We don't need any old man to come and open the doors of that prison. We only need our own conviction, our own inner strength, to one day burst out of these petty surrenders and petty appetites and our surrender to them, and say, "Well, enough."

Generally, you find that a spiritual awakening comes out of self-revulsion or in a situation of crisis. It is very normal that a man rushes to his priest when he is extremely troubled and doesn't know what to do. "Lead kindly light." But once you are out of that situation which has caught us in its grip and we have been released from that crisis, back we go into our old life. I call this the yo-yo effect — going up and down, up and down, up and down, ceaselessly, eternally.

So, what we have to really do is what, I think, Christ said, "Take up thy bed and walk." He didn't **do** anything, but his suggestion was so powerful because it was backed by his spiritual, what shall I say, nobility, immensity, his compassion. "Take up your bed and walk, man!" "What are you talking about?" "Get up!" And that fellow who couldn't even walk for years, you know, the sick and the palsied, as the Bible says — where did he get the strength to do it? Strength is not in our legs or in our arms. It is all very nice to go to the gymnasium and build a mighty body, but you all know where it ends up — it ends up in the same grave that holds a weakling, a puny fellow. The grave is no different — perhaps a little bigger in one case and a little smaller in another case, you see.

So, that's where we are all headed, you see, unless you are going to say, "No grave for me." My body shall go into the grave, of course, because as a civic necessity bodies have to be disposed of. It is only a civic necessity. You can't leave dead bodies around because they stink, they spread disease, so the municipality or the corporation insists upon dead bodies being removed — buried, cremated, disposed of through eagles — what have you. That is the destiny of the body — material must go back into the material. "Dust thou art and to the dust thou shalt return." It applies to the body, not to the inner 'me', my essential 'me'.

So, we have to understand first that there are two selves here: my inner Self which is Divine, which is eternal, and my lower self, which is temporal and here for the nonce — that goes with the body. Now unfortunately, if we are too addicted to our habits and appetites, we form what we call impressions, and these impressions make us act and react in the same way *ad nauseam*. You can see this in normal human behaviour. A man has a friend. The moment they meet, they go off into the same old routine — shaking hands, patting each other on the back, getting back into slang, kicking a football — whatever it is, a routine. He meets another guy with whom he is not so familiar. Now they shake hands, there is a more polite form of language, a more shall we say 'cultured' pattern of behaviour. He goes back home; he behaves in a set pattern with his father, in a different set pattern with his mother.

My Master used to say, "We have deepened these grooves and channels and, like rain water will flow only through an already created channel which may be a gutter, or which may be a river, every time life energy flows through us, it flows into these gutters and channels which we have created by our impressions and which, if you continue to do long enough, you can't escape out of." They become like ravines.

So, these ways have to be closed. And cleaning means precisely that — closing the way by which we react and act, again and again, in the same repetitive mode. It is like a gramophone record. Every time you put it on it plays the same music. It cannot do otherwise.

That is why there is a subject called psychology. If each individual human being were spontaneous, open, and reacted to situations not out of past experience or future hope, but out of the need of the moment, psychology would be impossible. Psychology is possible precisely because all human beings behave in a set way. You may be Australian, I may be Indian — it doesn't matter a damn, you see. The kangaroo behaves in its own way. The lion behaves in its own way.

It is like mapping a territory. If the territory was going to change every day, you would have no maps. It is precisely because it is set, fixed over geological periods of time, that you have maps of the continents of this world, maps of the oceans of this world. A map represents something which is fixed, something which in the near future will not change. Similarly, a character is something which is fixed. But unfortunately, it does not mean you should not have a character. What sort of character should we have? Because you find every human being has so many different facets of character, facets of behaviour. Behaviourism is a subject because people behave in different ways at different times with different people under different situations.

It is said that when there are times of misery, really colossal human misery, the best comes out in human beings. They are able to share. During World War II, when people had to sleep in the tube stations in London, they would happily share whatever they had — no selfishness. But where there is plenty, we quarrel over everything. I think it was James Allen, an English philosopher of a century back, who by observation of nature said, "In the winter, if you put out a small piece of bread, sparrows will all congregate there and eat happily together. But in summer, when there is food everywhere, you put out a loaf of bread and one sparrow will sit on it and prevent other sparrows from coming near." This has a moral for all of us: Plenty breeds selfishness. Poverty opens the heart, because unless you have been miserable, you cannot understand the misery of others. All this talk of sympathy, you know, when we own Rolls Royce cars and live in nine-bedroom mansions, is stupid. It is theoretical; it is hypocrisy. We must suffer, you see. But — this is a great miracle — when we create opportunities for our own suffering, then Nature does not make us suffer. And here lies the beauty of the yogic system, that we voluntarily accept suffering, and Nature says, "Well, what can I give this fellow? He is already suffering. I can't make him suffer any more than he is suffering voluntarily, willingly, by himself."

So, in a sense, we escape out of a situation of suffering over which we have no control into a situation of suffering which we have created for ourselves, and therefore which is totally under our control. We use suffering as a ladder to escape from predetermined suffering, and therefore I have now my destiny within my fist. I can suffer if I choose; I can be not suffering if I choose.

We must understand that suffering is not something imposed from outside. It is imposed from outside when you don't want it and you try to escape from it, when you are running away, when you are an escapist. Your samskara says, "Where will you run away, because I am in you." All that you have created in the past through your thoughts and actions — not necessarily bad thoughts and bad actions, but even good thoughts and good actions — whatever leaves an impression upon you is a samskara. You have a nice ice cream and it is superb, and the mind thinks of going there again and eating that same ice cream. You find people who are addicted to holidays going back to the same place over and over again. "Where are you going?" "Fisherman's Cove." "What's your dad doing?" "He's on his yacht." You don't have to ask these questions; you know where they are. It's like the owner of a dog; "Where's your dog?" "Oh, he must be under my chair, you know. He is afraid of firecrackers." And you look and there he is.

So, when we understand that everything that we have created is within us, we are responsible for their existence within us, we are our own creators in that sense. The original creation of the soul was by God. The subsequent creation of everything that we have — the body, the mind, the intellect, etc. — is **our** creation. You have a child, and then you say, "Oh, I didn't want this child." But it is your creation now. So, who is to uncreate? Spiritual law says, "You. The maker of the bed must lie upon it." — very terse, very simple sentences you find in all the ancient great literatures of this world. But precisely because they are simple, and unfortunately, because they say, "God will help you," we have lost this idea that "I can be responsible for my own future."

We are always waiting for the Messiah, as if suddenly He is going to descend from a golden chariot, blowing fire through his nose and ears and saying, "Come, I have liberated you." There is no such Messiah. There never has been, there never will be. You see, it is a term. Even today, we are waiting for the advent of Christ again. Why should we have to wait for the advent of Christ? For whom did Christ wait? I mean, had he been like one of us, he would also have sat there and said, "I am waiting for the advent of Christ." Somebody would have said, "Damn fool, **you** are Christ yourself. Wake up! What do you think you are here for? To make chairs and tables?"

So you see, he had to be initiated, too, by John the Baptist. Initiation is the process of awakening you to your inner existence. It is nothing more than that. You are given an idea that there is something in you (you may call it anything you like) which is higher, nobler, more purposeful in achieving for you an eternal state — not of beatitude, not of bliss, not of grace (all this is all talk), but of existence. We don't exist. We live. That's why we call this 'life'. I believe life comes when something which is eternally existent becomes embodied, and for the moment it lives through that body. Very much like a soap bubble: the air is entrapped and the thinner it gets, the more beautiful the colours. We have all blown soap bubbles in our lives. Some of them are fascinating. And yet, at a particular point it must burst. It must **burst** — there is no question, you have no control over it. You can blow it, but you can't stop it from bursting. So, we are all blowing our own bugles. Sometimes it is to wake up in the morning, sometimes it is to broadcast our victories, sometimes it is the final blowing of the bugle, you know, the last post (as they say in the army), when we cease to be.

So, everything is inside. Yoga says, "Look within. He is there. Don't go look for Him outside." It is not that He is not outside. If He is inside, He must be everywhere. God is everywhere, in everything, at all times. But then I cannot escape from this truth that He is within me, too. Spirituality says, not that temple worship is wrong, or going to church is wrong, or idol worship is wrong — it doesn't say any of these things. It only says these are useless, they are not effective. Because, as long as you are depending on a God external to yourself, you are afraid.

I don't know any two friends who are not afraid of each other on certain occasions. What will my friend say at home if I come with him to my dad? He may blurt out something, you see. So we tell him, "Hey John, for heaven's sake, keep your bloody mouth shut," and John doesn't know what he is not to reveal, and he says, "Oh, you told me in the presence of the father. I have seen this happen. You told me not to say something in front of your father. What was it?" So, this sort of situation comes about. Even friends are afraid of each other.

So, when there is a God outside, in all these Semitic religions — Islam, Christianity, the Jewish religion — everywhere you find this fear of God. Christianity seems to be a little more evolved, that there at least its prophet preaches compassion, love, mercy, etc. Again, it is fear. You go to Moses, it is fear: "Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not..." Fortunately, only ten, but bad enough for us, you know? Imagine if you had a hundred commandments!

Spirituality says there is no God outside who says, "Thou shalt not." There is no God outside who is going to punish you. If He is everywhere, He is inside you. If you are going to be punished, it is by you yourself, from inside yourself. You are going to punish yourself. This is amply proved, that when a person has become desperate, has lost faith in life, has lost faith in himself and his abilities to change, the ultimate act of despair is suicide. No God comes and kills him, you see. He kills himself. Unfortunately, they don't understand that suicide does not change anything. It, only for the moment, takes you away from the scene of action. But you have to come back, and you have added on one more most heinous crime of taking life. "Thou shalt not kill" applies to yourself, too. Thou shalt not kill **yourself,** too.

So you see, we cannot escape through death, whether it comes naturally or whether it is self-inflicted. Death is no door to immortality. We have to earn it here. We have to leave this life while yet alive, which means I don't live any more. I let Him who is within me live this life for me. This is surrender. It means obeying the inner voice. But to obey it I must hear it, so I have to recognise the existence of the source inside me, allow it to develop, and then allow Him to speak, obey Him, and by progressive obedience that voice becomes stronger and stronger — all the outer voices are stilled. Now me and my Maker, we are in absolute peace, in harmony, and together for all time.

So, this is a brief spiritual sort of explanation of what spirituality is. Here, we don't bow to any external authority, because what is the external authority that can help me? Once, we had a small robbery in my house and I said, "Send for the police." My father laughed and said, "The police only come after the fact. What on earth is the use of calling the police when the house has been burgled?" What is the use of calling a doctor when the patient is dead? What is the use of calling a priest to say prayers over the coffin before it is lowered into the grave? Does the priest have any faith in it? I venture to say no priest ever had this faith. If they had the faith they should say, "Arise," and Lazarus must come up from the dead as he did before Christ. But that was a one man show, you see. If you study the impact of religions, the growth of religions, the origin of religions, it has always been a one man affair. And what did he leave? He left behind a circus full of animals with nobody to control them. It is like the lord of the ring (not the Lord of the Rings, but the lord of the ring), the ringmaster, suddenly was recalled, leaving the lions and the tigers and the lambs and the sheep all going down the ring, and now starts nature in its own way — the lion preys on the lamb, the lamb tries to run away, there's a man with a hatchet who wants to kill it and eat its meat — pandemonium, chaos.

So, we always need a ringmaster, but the best ringmaster is the one within me, who from inside says, "Lion, lie down. Let the lamb go." You know, in Christianity you have this famous example of the lamb — a meek animal, inoffensive, can't do anything to anybody. In the Sahaj Marg system my Master used to call it the tamed animal of God. You see, when we tame a lamb, it's not so important; it doesn't look like such a big achievement. But when we tame a lion and make it do what we want, including putting our head into its open mouth and coming out alive, everybody claps. This is because we have been attuned to the idea that danger, and overcoming danger, is something heroic. But in spirituality we are told there is no such thing as danger. You create it. You trained that lion to open its mouth. You trained him to keep it open until you put your head in and take it out. Where is the danger in this? The danger is here.

We are always talking of temptation. But where **is** temptation? Why are not all the people tempted by the same thing? Each one has a different temptation. One cannot allow a pub to pass by. If it is open, in he goes and he says, "Just a drink, Harry," and comes out tottering after the barman says, "Closing time," and then he orders three together, downs all three together and staggers out. The other friend is sitting there and, you know, probably sipping lime juice. So, if temptation were to be in the object, everybody would be tempted by the same thing. The fact that none of us fall to the same thing is proof that temptation is within each one of us, and it responds according to the samskaras of the past to a specific object of temptation. Whether it is wine, whether it is women, whether it is men, whether it is power, prestige. When we recognise this, that it is in **me** that the temptation is, we will stop veiling our women from head to toe, as is done in one religion, because if you look, you fall. Even the ankles should not be visible, for heaven's sake! Now, what sort of a man is that, that cannot look at the toe of a woman without being aroused?

So you see, there is nothing to fight outside. There is no temptation outside; there is no Devil outside. There is God outside, of course, but not for me. For me, God, Devil, temptation — everything is inside. And through this process of cleaning in spirituality, we get rid of all these things little by little and we find that we are evolving. How do we know we are evolving? Because we don't behave as we used to do in the past. No repetitive programs, no falling every time you see the same object, no drinking the same whisky. "Top of the drop," I saw advertised here — a beer. I don't know what "Top of the drop" means, but it probably means, "You have climbed to the highest. Now you are going to fall off the cliff," or something like that — "Top of the drop."

So, spirituality is essentially a very logical and very serious, very purposeful, and very rational system. People say science is rational; all this is blah-blah, irrational. It is stupid! Only the man of intellect, whose intellect is only here in the brain, can talk like that. It is like saying, "Love is in the head." Everything is in the heart. This is a processor, you know, the central processing unit — CPU.

Spirituality says, "My friend, you have created or brought into being what you are today. It is proof that you could make of yourself whatever you are. It is also proof that you can become what else you want to become. It is proof that you have the capacity to change yourself." If a man could have become an animal, the animal can again become man. Spirituality puts the onus for our evolution right where it belongs — upon us. And if you are able to do that, we don't need any external props, we don't need churches, we don't need God. I only need Him who is within me, who, in a sense, is myself; in a sense, is not myself. He is not myself as long as my lower self and my higher Self are disconnected. This is the real schizophrenia. But the moment I am able to merge these two selves into one, I don't know whether I am now He, or I am I. There comes the beauty that now existence begins, because life, in the sense that we know it, has ended. Therefore my Master says, "Until you die, you cannot exist."

Thank you very much.

VIII

Malaysia

November, 1994

INAUGURATION OF KINDERGARTEN

Klang, Malaysia

18 November, 1994

Dear sisters and brothers, I thought at my age I had finished in school, but I find myself back right where I began, in the KG again. But it is nice to have someone like Christian as my teacher. I wish I were really back, you know, as a child here and starting life all over again. I think most of you (I mean, those who are not children) would agree that there are not only few moments, but many moments when we feel that had we the opportunity to live this life again, we would prefer to lead it again, and that we would lead it better than ever before. Such feelings are the outcome of weaknesses, mistakes, feelings of guilt, sorrow, misery, etc. But I can tell you one thing — that so long as you look back, all these feelings are dominating our lives, making us miserable and weep. This is a weakness to say, "I want another opportunity," because we have had, according to the belief of our ancient country India, perhaps millions of opportunities when we have been alive and we have made the same mistake over and over again, and that is why we are here today. One more chance perhaps would be squandered again.

The lesson of Sahaj Marg is that if you are looking to the past, bewailing your present, and thinking you could have a better future if you had another chance, I beg to say that you would be grossly mistaken. Because, if in this life you are not going to do what you have to do to get out of this prison we call life and death, even another million chances is not going to help you. That is why Babuji was always saying, "**Now**, in this life, **here** is the door which is open." Let us go into what we call spiritual freedom. Not in the next life. Who knows whether a next life exists or not? Who knows whether I will be born as a human being or not? Who knows whether I will have a Master in my next life or not?

So, it is too silly to imagine that I will have to live again, that I would have a better chance in the next life. Perhaps some people have even committed suicide on this idle and futile basis. Those who cannot make their future now, today in the present, will never make it. It is like in school — if you don't do well in this class, you are not going up to the next class; you are going to be detained in this class. There is no question about that.

So, to draw a parallel from these schools to our school of Sahaj Marg, we have to get on with the job — every moment thinking of the future, and creating the future with our will and with our effort. We have both the effort — in the effort we are aided by the Mission. We have the system, we have the practice, we have the Master to guide us. That part of it should not be difficult at all. You are not asked to do anything by yourself. Everything is, in fact, literally done for you. What do you do when you meditate and you get a sitting? Surely nothing, except to be receptive. And if in that you find problems, there is something very badly wrong with humanity. All that you have to do is to sit. You go to the dentist, he gives you an injection, he pulls out the teeth, and he takes away five hundred dollars. Here, you are put in a comfortable chair or a comfortable floor, we just tell you, "Close your eyes. Be receptive," that's all, you see. And people come and complain, "I can't do it. I don't know how to do it. I have never felt anything," etc. If in Sahaj Marg you do not succeed, you will not succeed anywhere on earth — now or in the future.

So, that is the thing about the practice. Will, you have. Even when you do something wrong, you are applying your will. You cannot possibly do anything without having will, and the more you do it, the more will power you are exhibiting. A man who continues to smoke and increases his smoking is showing that he has more and more will power, but only on the negative side. A man who is a drug addict — his will has not failed; this [points to heart] has failed.

So, without will power, you cannot even go to the dogs! Even to go to the dogs you need will power. Then why not use the will power? Just turn it this way, you see. It is only a question of changing direction, giving a new direction, new orientation to our lives, with the will power that we already have, using a system which is so beautifully simple that you have virtually nothing to do except to sit and close your eyes.

Sister Christina was saying how wonderful this school is, how many troubles she had, what about all the lights, income tax, bribes, etc. We also have our problems, because when we sit down and we try to see the light, the light does not go on. Many people say, "I don't see the light." We cannot call an electrician. Where is the light? It is a luminosity, or light without luminosity, as Babuji Maharaj said.

So, don't try to see the light. Imagine it is there. It is a mere supposition, Babuji said again and again. No electrician — I have to re-wire myself. How? By thought. If I think this is good, it is good. If I think this is bad, it is bad. I think it was in one of Shakespeare's plays (Hamlet, was it?) where he says, "Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so." You think a person is good; that person is good. You think this dog will not bite; it will not bite. You think that bull is going to chase you; sure as anything it will chase you. Because you are providing the power for its action, the thought for its action.

I find in our satsangh there are too many prejudices. This is perhaps not a forum, but since you have an atrium, I am thinking of the forum, which is also a Greek word. This is our forum, and our preceptors — we have four today, we are going to have four more tomorrow, we already have about eleven or twelve (I don't know how many) — must learn to be gentle, to be kind, to be understanding, to love. There are too many complaints about preceptors who dominate, who are domineering, who lay down the law, who moralise. I hope the new preceptors and the old preceptors will all sit together and decide, not just to put 'I love you' in flowers on the doorway — I had a little trouble making out what it was, because it's 'We-heart-you'. I thought, you know, it must be E-O-U, I-O-U [laughter], but Christian has said, "We love you." Preceptors have to cultivate this. Otherwise, I tell you, preceptors are failures, not only in the satsangh but in their own lives, too.

I mean, I am sad that here in our assembly we have two sisters who don't speak to each other. It is really very sad. What will you do when one sister dies, as surely one day one of you is going to die? Then you will sit down and weep, "All my life I could have been kind. I could have shown some gentleness. I could have given her a hug. I could have helped her over a staircase." You see, to regret after somebody is dead is too late. It does not help the departed one. It does not help at all the surviving one. Learn to make up your differences, Christianity says, before you go to bed. Resolve thy differences with thy brother.

I mean, it is a shameful thing that we, from Ceylon and India, most of us — it does not matter that you have a Malaysian passport, your blood is still Indian, your ways are still Indian, your feelings are still Indian, your *bhasha* [language] is still Indian. *Malayalam Tamil* — bad Tamil, of course, but nevertheless Tamil. What have you done with your culture? What have you done with your tradition? What have you done with the great heritage that we have got? I am not referring to women in jeans or lipstick — that is superficial, it can be removed. You wipe it off with a tissue and it is gone, or better still, you kiss somebody and he takes the lipstick and you come back without it. It has happened, you know, because Babuji was once kissed by a woman suddenly, without his knowledge, and the first thing he told me was, "See if there is any lipstick!" [laughter] He was very worried. This was in Europe. Then he told me something which was very frightening. He said, "Next time somebody comes to kiss me I will tell her, 'Go to Parthasarathi!'" [laughter] But while I am happy it did not happen, there is also a certain sorrow that it did not happen! [laughs]

We are always attracted by things which frighten us. That is why we go diving, we go skydiving, we go skin-diving, do all these stupid crazy things, break our legs. Sahaj Marg says, "Be sensible, be loving, be **human**." Before I leave Malaysia, I want to see this beautiful satsangh, our assembly, our forum, become one of the heart. No more sister quarrelling with sister, or brother quarrelling with brother. Or preceptors dominating — preceptors are not supposed to dominate. They are supposed to serve. We are here to serve. And there is no point in saying, "I want to be like Babuji. I want to be like Lalaji," and being what we are. I cannot be like Lalaji if I continue to be like Chari. Can I? It is not possible.

So, we have to learn not to have prejudices, not to have hatred, not to have presuppositions about anybody. That is why this Mission is not growing here. I am sorry to say that even in America, where when I went in 1985 we hardly had a hundred members; today it is nearly fifteen hundred abhyasis. We have new centres in places like Dubai, Sharjah. In Turkey we have a centre. In Israel we have a centre. All along the African west coast we have centres — all after Babuji's *mahasamadhi*.

Why is this centre here not growing? You must examine your own attitudes. The responsibility rests squarely with the preceptors. I have no hesitation in saying this, that our preceptors have not been doing their work.

What is the use of accepting a responsibility if you are going to betray that responsibility? It is a betrayal of the Master. The right way for preceptors who don't want to work or who cannot find the time to work would be to tell me, "Chari, here is your certificate. Please keep it." I assure you, you will get it back when you are again ready to do the work. It is not a resignation; it is not a sack. It is a temporary deposit of money in the bank.

That would be the gentlemanly way. That would be the honourable way. That would be spiritual honesty.

So, let us not go around pretending that we are loving our neighbours. When a person cannot love his own brother or his own sister or his father or mother, how on earth is he going to love a neighbour? Is it going to be possible? How are you going to love a stranger? How are you going to love **anybody** for that matter, even your own wife? Because, it is in the family that the heart learns to love, and the family begins not with the wife, who is an importation, but with brothers and sisters. Sisters are exported, wives are imported. And we have to learn to love both because that is how the economy is balanced — import against export.

So, love must begin in the family. I cannot understand how a girl born in one family can love anybody else in another family if she has lost the love for her own family. It is not possible. To me, it is absolutely impossible. So, if you are here in spirituality, and we have spoken enough about love — I mean, there are volumes of our writings on love — not just pages, volumes. What are you all doing with those books? Assuming you have read them, what have you done with what you have read? Please start all over again, read them all over again, and do what you have to do on those principles, from now.

On a world average, I expect not less than forty abhyasis per preceptor. So, if there are going to be twenty preceptors here, there must be eight hundred abhyasis at least, to justify the existence of the Mission here. Forty per preceptor is an average. There may be somebody in Nepal who has no abhyasi at all today. But we must work. What are we here for? We are here to serve the people of the country where we are living. I go around serving everybody everywhere to the best of my ability. I have no nationality, I have no religion — the two bondages that finish our spiritual life forever. No nationality, no religion. I don't belong to any nationality. I don't belong to any religion. My nationality is my Master. He is my father. He is my Guru. He is my God. Therefore I am able to go place to place, wandering around like a dog, trying to do my best. Because for me, either everybody is my people, or nobody is my people. If I can do it, surely you can do it.

I can assure you, as I was born a Leo, astrologically speaking, I have been much more arrogant than any one of you can imagine. I have been the proudest blighter in this creation. Not without cause — I have sufficient cause to be proud and boastful and arrogant — at least some justification. But people without anything being proud and boastful and arrogant, I cannot understand. At least are they Leos? If not, button up those ego trips, lock them away forever, and throw them into the sea, the Strait of Malacca, or whatever strait you have. Because, if I can give up biting but only roar, you can also give up biting, though you have to roar on occasion.

After all, Babuji said, "I want lions." So, let us be lions. A lion walks with dignity. When it goes through the jungle everything shakes. We don't want that. We want a lion which will be so tame that a child can put its head into the open mouth of the lion with impunity, teasing the lion, "Come on, bite me! Come on, bite me!" And the poor lion, you know, is getting tired. It says, "For heaven's sake, take your head out. I can't keep it open much longer."

I am not demanding anything more of you than what Master demanded of me, and of all of you. That is also something preceptors should remember. They should not ask of abhyasis more than what they can themselves give. If you cannot love, don't ask for love. If you cannot feed, don't ask to be fed. If you cannot be hospitable yourself, don't ask for hospitality elsewhere.

Charity begins at home, which means I have to be charitable, not towards myself but towards others. This is one of the grossly misinterpreted and misunderstood sayings of the English language. "Charity begins at home, sir. So, I put the donation in my own pocket and walk away with it. After all, charity begins at home. If I am not going to be charitable towards myself, who else is going to be charitable towards me?" The real meaning is, in your home you must be charitable. To whom? With your brothers and sisters, with your parents, grandparents, children. Charitable means not giving them ten shillings every day as pocket money, but charity in judgement. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They are children. They behave like children. These are old people; they are senile. They shout and scream because they are at the end of their lives and that's all they can do. The old man wants to go to the toilet. He is afraid of walking alone because if he falls and slips in the bathroom, that is the end — finished. Most old people die in the bathroom. He wants just a helping hand, and the daughter grumbles, "Damn this old fellow. Again and again. How many times must he go to the toilet in a day?" I hope you don't have to when you grow old, because as the proverb says, "You will not get more than what you have given." No one will get more than what he or she has given, if at all. Because there is a balance there which is held out and says, "How much did you give in your life? Nothing? Nothing shall you get."

So, to be humble, to be loving, to be kind, are things to help **yourself,** not somebody else. Jean Michel, if he is kind towards me, it is not **me** he is helping. It is himself he is helping, because it is one more step on the path to our Goal. If he loves others it is not for their sake, but because by loving, he goes another stair up — second floor to third floor. If he is kind and generous — seventh floor, seventh Heaven.

So remember, you see, this character business, building your character, is **not** for others. It is for yourself. If you don't do it, others may not suffer — **you** will surely suffer, because having had the opportunity, the time to do it, you did not do it. Young, old, men, women — I appeal to all of you, that this brotherhood must be welded into something strong, loving, and therefore which holds together, sticks together as a group, and because of that pervasive love it becomes a sort of a magnet which will attract others towards itself. Otherwise, you will only repel. No caste, no community, no nationality, no language, no religion — no barriers of any kind.

So today, on the auspicious occasion of the opening of this school, I would like you all to imagine you are back in another sort of school, where we learn two or three things: how to live our material life in the best way possible so as to conduce to our spiritual life. Material life is given to us only to grow spiritually to our Goal, not for anything else. We are not here to make money. We are not here to become famous or prominent or to be even successful in life. None of these things matter. If I am evolving on my spiritual ladder, that is a successful life.

Our material life is only to earn a living so that I can continue to be alive as long as it is necessary for me to reach my Goal. Thereafter, my life is my Master's. So, I have my life for myself first, for spiritual reasons, and when my work with me is completed, my life is at the disposal of my Master. Number one. Number two: how, being students of one school, we must be friendly with all, we must be generous with all, we must love all. Three: like in school, where a boy will pass a slip to another boy who doesn't know the answer to a question, even at the risk of being found out, we must help each other. Human beings, if they don't help each other, are worse than animals. We have to help each other. As we evolve we become more and more capable of helping others. A strong man must lend a hand to a weak man to cross a street, to go up a staircase, for the father to go to the toilet. What else is strength given to you for?

There is an old proverb in Tamil which says, the *panamaram* [palm tree] is so tall and has its thorns, but it is useless because it does not give shade for even one person to sit under it. If he is thirsty the fruit is too high for him to reach out and take and drink. Its wood is rotten. Of what use is a panamaram? We don't want to be like panamarams, you see. Palms — useless, a disgrace on our agriculture. Perhaps God has some plan for it. That is His problem, not ours.

We don't want to grow in isolation. Today you find this perplexing truth, that you have huge apartment buildings where there are 225 families and 6,000 people, and every single person is lonely. In former times we lived in a property of ten acres, fifteen acres, twenty acres, and the next neighbour was two furlongs or one mile away, and nobody was lonely. Today you can hear things going on across the wall, and yet you are lonely. What is this? Why is this?

So we have to think, and I hope you will all think with your hearts, not with your head, because the head is a crooked thing. If you ask your intelligence or your head, it will only tell you what you have programmed. If you have been hating someone, the head will say, "Well, go ahead, because the more you do it, the stronger you become in your hate." Ask your heart, "Is it right?" And then you will find tears come to your eyes automatically. That is why people weep in satsangh, because the heart gets an opportunity to come awake out of its silence, out of its prison in which you have put it, and for the first time you feel something, you do not know what, and therefore the human system expresses it in the form of tears. I would like to see more tears here. Before I leave, I would consider it a successful visit if I saw every one of you weeping as if somebody is dead. And who should that person be who should be dead? Your lower self. Then this tear business will be tears of joy, that my lower self is dead and buried — thank heavens!

So you see, we have big expectations of others, but unless we have great expectations from ourselves we can expect nothing from anybody else — we have no right to expect anything from anybody else. The only right I have in this world, in this universe, is the right over myself. And if I do not use that right correctly, spiritually, to grow and to help others to grow, even that right I shall forfeit.

Thank you.

BEING WITH THE MASTER

Klang, Malaysia
18 November (evening), 1994

You see, nobody is afraid of a cat, which will not bite. It may scratch, but if you say you are a lion, people will at least be afraid a little. But I find in Sahaj Marg, perhaps you are so used to lions that the fear of lions has gone! So that is why I requested sister Christina to try and get me a *Lion King* video, and she managed it, because from lion to *Lion King* perhaps there may be some progress. [laughter] We shall see.

But you know, in a more serious vein, in all these talks we find one thing that is exposed, and what is really exposed is the pull every person faces between his desires on one side and his Goal on the other. And all our talks are only serving to reveal this. One does not write a diary, but has an experience which now has to be written, and like everything else, you know, if you don't do it on the spot, it is forgotten. Like a dream — dreams are quickly forgotten. Experiences are easily forgotten. [Dog barking] I think he also wants to make a speech!

So, we are always talking about this inner struggle. Now two talks today — one by Serge and one by the Malaysian lady who went to Eisenarzt — they showed the struggle between seeing and not-seeing, between being with and not being with somebody. In Sahaj Marg it is very well-known, it has been explained very well in Babuji's books, that 'to be with' means something more than just 'to be with' physically. Suppose the Prime Minister of our country has certain programmes for his nation and he calls a cabinet meeting. He asks his ministers, "Are you with me in this proposal?"

So 'to be with', from the angle of the abhyasi, is just a physical thing — to sit there and to laugh at his jokes, watch while he is sleeping, tell stories if there are three or four of them, thinking the sleeping man does not hear — that sleeping man doesn't listen, but often he hears! But the real 'to be with' means, are you with him in the fundamental aspects of what he wants to do and achieve for you? If your Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, outlines certain plans for Malaysia, we would assume that he has nothing to gain from it. Because he already has his palace, he is already a sultan. What more can he get? It is for the people.

Similarly, if you are with, for instance, me, at the moment, are you with me in everything that I want for you? One of which is to give up this foolishness of wanting to be with me physically — number one. Number two, this Malaysian lady was so easily satisfied that I appeared at the door and went away. Now that is the old Hindu problem of *darshan* — I have seen him; it is enough. "*Kandein, kandein. Sivagamiyai kandein.*" ["I saw, I saw. Sivagami I saw."] But what is the use? "*Sivagamiyai kanduttu veetukkuporen.*" ["I have seen Sivagami; I'm going home."] Isn't it? If you love a girl, you just don't want to look at her and go back. You want to be with her. But if she is sitting there, you know, looking like this, thinking of her parents or another boyfriend, you say, "Damn it, you are not even with me. You are somewhere else." I am sure all of you have undergone this, even in Malaysia. You are with, but you are not with. It can apply for the girl to the boy also — the boy is there, but thinking of Sivagami, and he is with Kausalya, and Kausalya says, "Where are you?" He says, "No, I am with you." She says, "Not at all. You are somewhere else. You are somewhere far away."

So you see, this business of 'being with' is a very important thing. It is not so easy as it sounds. It is a fundamental need that you must be with your Guide. Not physically, not mentally, but as a person who cherishes, upholds, and works for whatever your Guide is working for. Otherwise our system will deteriorate into so many other systems. I have heard of, for instance, an ashram where the guru comes and gives *darshan* once a week, let us say Saturday or Thursday. He comes and stands on the balcony and waves his hand and everybody is happy. Later on, everybody claims that the guru looked exactly into her eye or his eye, and everyone is satisfied. "Oh, he looked into my eyes, you see, and I felt he knew everything about me." How much we cheat ourselves. A whole week they wait for a few minutes darshan. And there you cannot complain that I am not with you. You know, there are many such organisations in India, where to go and meet the guru would be considered a disrespect. You cannot even say that you want to meet him. "Who are you to be with him?", the bodyguards will ask you. I don't like the term bodyguard, but since it has been used, let us say, we call them *dwarapalas* — doorkeepers. Even in temples we have them.

So unless you are able to be with him in this particular fashion, that you are supportive of everything he stands for, you are supportive of his existence, because without his existence nothing can happen. His existence is for a particular purpose, and if you are not with him in that purpose there is no point in your being here at all.

So you see, it is a very grave matter. Grave in English, and *grave* in French. So, to be with the Master means to be with him in every aspect of his work. Not to be sleeping when he is sleeping, eating when he is eating, walking with him, listening to music with him — that you can do with anybody else, with everybody else. Here, 'to be with' means, to be entirely, hundred-percent with your heart, supportive of his work. And his work is also about you.

So, to be with the Master means to support his work in a general way as applying to all humanity, and in a particular way as applying to yourself, each individually. This is the distinction, that when you think of his work upon you and you co-operate, you are with the Master in his work upon you. When you support his work by looking after him, talking about what he is doing, explaining things to others, loving them as he would like you to love them, etc., you are with him in a greater context, in a wider context. And if you are ever able to go up to the third rung, that now you don't distinguish between his work and your work, it is as if you are his very shadow. Again, you must not misunderstand this as being physical, but in a sense, you resonate with everything that he does. Which means your heart is now in tune with his heart. That is the final stage when you can say, "I am with my Master always and shall be with him eternally."

So, to be with your Master is not a simple thing. When you confine it to just, you know, the foolish games of listening to music and walking and sitting in the same car and travelling in the same plane, it is childish. It is like the Whitlam's son wanting the Whitlam father: "I must be with daddy." And when he is with daddy he wants mummy, so it is like a pendulum swinging between dad and mum. She is sitting here, he is sitting here, and the child is going up and down. The child also wants to be with his parents, but the child is so fickle-minded that when he is with the mother he wants the father; when he is with the father he wants the mother. You all know this. You don't have to be a parent; you can see this through observation.

So, the desire to be with the Master in these activities is a childish desire. To support his work upon you, and in general, is now an adult phase of that same desire, where you recognise that 'to be with' does not only mean the first childish phase, but includes something higher. "I am with him in everything that he does. I am with him in everything that he wants to do and achieve. In fact, I am a pillar of this edifice and I shall support it." And what is the final stage which can perhaps be achieved, and when it is achieved we say it is almost like *layavastha*, is that there is no consciousness of being with him or without him, because for all practical purposes you and he are one. No still-separated bodies, separated, whatever it is. You may not even be in this world at that moment. Such a person alone can say, "I am still with my Master."

My Master left his mortal body so many years ago — 1983. It is now eleven years coming on for twelve years. But I have never felt, you know, that he left his body and that he died, or anything like that. For me it was not puzzling, but something I tried to understand. How is it that this man is gone and I feel so little sorrow? Of course, there was the human consideration that he had suffered enough, and any man or woman in their right senses would not wish such a person to suffer more by living here. Normal human love says, "Oh, he must live longer. Why not two years more? Why not three years more? Why not a few years more?" But that is a self-centred, selfish desire, and generally it is based on total selfishness because, "Without him, what will I do?" I have known people to ask, even during my Master's lifetime, or tell their children, "Go and get what he has to give before he dies." I mean, ultimate blasphemy, for me.

So, when apparently the person has left, but I don't feel the separation — has he really left, or am I feeling something which is stupid, crazy, nonsensical? Unless you experience this yourself, you will never know. It is all right to have what you call a living guru and have his darshan, to be cursed by him, kicked by him, occasionally a smile.

You know, to be a true disciple is not easy by any means. It is easier to be a so-called follower of the guru who gives you darshan once a week, or once in six months — you have nothing to do. You go to the place of the congregation and there are thousands of people waiting. You also wait. Suddenly there is a hush because the balcony door has opened and the great person has just arrived. And everybody — you know, it is like one of our Kali temples, Amman temples, Mariamman temples — and the dance we saw this morning, the Tumakum, etc. And we create in ourselves a fervour which we don't feel, a satisfaction which is not there, a craving which never existed in us, and we are living a moment of lie in saying, "I have had a darshan." Darshan was not given; darshan was not taken. "I saw." Yes, but to have a darshan means very much more than that. Darshan means to look inside. Did he reveal himself to you? Or did you just see the same figure that you have seen in portraits and paintings and pictures *ad nauseam*, day after day after day, in place after place after place. That is what we are all doing. Unless you are able to look into the heart there is no darshan.

Even for your wife, I tell you this: nobody has ever really **seen** his wife. He may have loved her, hugged her, kissed her, produced children through her, but it is a fact of life that few men have ever known really what their wives are. Why? Because you look at the body, you look at its beauty, you look at its pleasure, or its ability to give you pleasure, and there it stops. This pleasure forms a *purdah* — a curtain — between you and your beloved. And for women, they understand their husbands better. That is why women know men better than men know women.

So, to know something you must go to the heart of that thing. It is not a superficial thing, you see, that, "I have seen his photograph. It is enough. Why should I go and see him? He looks better in his photographs. I tell you, sir, face to face, there is nothing very impressive." I have heard this! "Face to face, there is nothing very impressive, but the photograph, you see — how beautiful! That is why I paid five hundred rupees and brought it to South Africa all the way from India." And I tell him, "You are willing to pay five hundred rupees for the photograph? How much will you give for me? You won't give one rupee!" Photograph is more important — beautifully developed, beautifully coloured, beautifully framed. Why do you like your photographs so much? Because it is an addiction to the form, and that is always with you. You mistake the photograph for the physical presence — forget the spiritual presence. And therefore you are happy. "He is always there with me, sir."

[gap in tape] "*Ammmma*!" And it becomes a song. A few tears, a little weeping, you know the Sivaji Ganesan style — very specific, very dramatic, and we are all in emotion, sitting there, wiping our handkerchiefs on our eyes. Which of you has not done this in a cinema, where Sivaji Ganesan wept before his mother's photograph? A lie again, you see. There is nothing real there; there is nothing real here.

So, we have to cultivate this ability to go into the heart, and you cannot do it unless you have gone into your own heart first. Therefore we meditate on the heart — one of the major reasons, that unless I can see what is in my heart, and unless I can be with what I see in my heart, with all its problems, with its Divinity, with its perhaps, I don't know, eye-catching beauty or horrible visage of the man who is going to punish me from inside myself — if I cannot be with Him who is inside me, I can never be with anybody outside me. This is an absolute truth. Don't have any questions about it, don't go to other gurus and ask, because they won't tell you the truth. They will tell you, "No, no, my son. It is not necessary because **I** am always with you." Wonderful. If I am not with my guru, my guru cannot be with me. How can two be together unless both are together with each other? Isn't it? And it is a lie to say, "But He has been with me eternally, sir." When have you felt it?

He who is in your heart is the eternal presence of yourself. Who has felt it? Who has had the courage to look into it? Because you are afraid that once we look in, and that fellow wakes up, you know, that sleeper awakes — what will happen to us? We are not so much afraid of punishment as the fact that after I have got into touch with Him, He may stop all my enjoyments in life. With Him watching from inside I cannot be a profligate; I cannot smoke; I cannot take hashish; I cannot womanise; I cannot rob a bank; I cannot even tell lies. "What is this, sir? Without lying, how to proceed? In today's world, without telling lies, how can you be successful? So, I close the door."

And then we rationalise. We justify and say, "Well, He has been always there. He is not going to run away now. Let me make my seven million or eight million or twenty million. Then I will open the door again and I'll find Him there. He will never leave me, sir. It is His kindness, it is His love." Wonderful, isn't it, to have such a presence? But remember that you can postpone it, but you cannot stop it. Because for Him, eternity is but a moment in time. For you, a moment of time can be an eternity. Should I repeat it? For Him, eternity is but a moment in time. For you, a moment in time may look as if it is eternity itself. You have all known this — a moment of pain, a moment of separation, a moment of suffering — and it looks as if it is lasting forever and ever, though it is but a moment.

So, until you have also come to the stage where eternity is but a moment of time, you cannot afford to play tricks and games with your Self. And this self is nothing more than that Self with whom you are wanting to be all the time. Because in some way, every abhyasi is a liar, knowingly or unknowingly, because every abhyasi says, "Sir, there is nothing you don't know, but..." Isn't it? And why do we say this? Because we know this fellow is a human being. Of course, convention demands that I have accepted him as my guru and therefore I should say, "Sir, you are all-knowing, all-loving, all kindness, etc." But in the heart of my hearts I hope that he is not really the all-knower, because then I cannot sit in front of him. So, it is a farce, it is a lie — *stuti*, we call it in Tamil — unnecessary praise, flattery, and this we are indulging in from time immemorial, as far as the Hindu religion is concerned. "You are the father, you are the mother, you are the son..." You see? How many lies have we been telling through the centuries of our existence? If you could count them you would be staggered.

The time has come to stop telling lies. The time has come to stop — to try being in the physical presence, hoping that He who is with you is not really divine, but is only a Master or a guru or whatever he is, and he cannot really see what is there. "Therefore the blighter sits with his eyes closed and also does cleaning for me. If he could see me, why doesn't he see me with his eyes open?"

Many people have asked this question. "Why does the Master close his eyes?" And when you say, "To see you better," they say, "Yes, sir," but outside they go and say, "Yes, yes. That is what he will say! He cannot **really** see, you know. Therefore, I can go and courageously sit in his presence." Often I feel, you know, that people who want to be very close physically have a lot of things to hide, which may not be seen just because they are close to us. It is a fact.

So, learn to see the Self within. For many reasons — one, then you know what is inside. Having seen, now you know whether you should be afraid of that fellow or love that fellow who is inside you. If you are afraid, then seek His help in overcoming that fear. That is why we have to do the cleaning on ourselves; otherwise you should be cleaning the Guru, you see, so that he doesn't see anything in us! "Master, I would like to give you a sitting." "Yes, please!" [laughter] If you are able to say, "I love this fellow who is inside me, the eternal presence," the problem is solved. Once and for all the problem of love is finished. My lover is in **me**. And I, His lover, am always with Him.

So, meditation is very important, because it is the only technique that can help you to look within, see what is there fearlessly, correct what you see there fearlessly, develop that association with love, until there is nothing but love in existence. So you see, with three words — 'to be with' — how much there is meaning in it, and I hope you will all want to be with your guide in the right sense, in the real sense, in the spiritual sense. May Master bless you all.

Thank you.

OPEN HOUSE

Klang, Malaysia

19 November, 1994

When we compare, whether it was the Mesopotamian, the Babylonian, wherever you go and look in history, the moment a nation or a people became rich in the material sense — money, slaves, concubines — and then they went into this orgy of power madness, that we are a nation which cannot be overcome by anybody. The Roman is *par excellence*, you know, the symbol of that arrogance. Or take, for that matter, our own British in modern times. Always a period of a peak in material civilisation proved to be the decline of that particular culture or that society.

So, the material way is not the way of even human happiness. It may be a time of human orgy, you see — people pretending to be happy, people pretending to be enjoying life — but they are so sick. That is like a man who drinks six bottles of whisky, vomits, and is rolling in his own vomit, in utter despair, in utter self-condemnation and, what shall I say, in utter despondency. You see this portrayed in the life of Siddhartha in a famous story by Herman Hesse. A very young fellow, born in the poorest of a Vedic family, the single son of the father and mother, destined to be a great Brahmin priest — not happy. He says, "What is all this ritualistic nonsense?" This is the other side, you see. On one side we have the material ritualism because, don't forget, we are all ritualistic. It is a ritual today to own your own house, to own your own car, to own a powerful team of people around you. It is a ritual. He does it; they do it; they do it — I must do it.

Today I find in Malaysia you are importing bits and pieces of America here. Malaysia is becoming very much American. Next time if I come here, I would be sad to see these big hoardings, you know — Pizza Hut, Burger King

— all those nasty, stupid things that they have in American cities. If you travel in America by road, if you sleep and wake up, you don't know where you are. Every city is the same. You approach it and you have these big hoardings — Pizza Hut — identical. If you are put to sleep in one Pizza Hut here in Malaysia, taken to another Pizza Hut and made to revive consciousness in America, you wouldn't know the difference!

So you see, we are following a ritualistic pattern of development. And what is ritualism but aping somebody else? On one side we have this in the material civilisations which have all gone. Nothing to remember them by except some books, some clay tablets, or some marvels like the Pyramids of Egypt. And on the other, we have this ritualistic nonsense of the religious side, where again we don't know what we are doing and why we are doing it. "They have done it. My grandfather did it. His grandfather did it. So, I am doing it. This is my *ishtadevata* [favourite god], my temple. Why? Because my father went there, my grandfather went there, my great-grandfather went there."

I am reminded of a story of a girl who was ferrying people across the river because her father was sick and her grandfather had died. An old wise man came as a passenger, and he asked this young girl, "Are you not afraid to ferry people across? Storms, typhoons, you know..." She said, "Yes, but what can I do? I have to do what I have to do." He said, "How did your father die?" She said, "The poor thing, you know, he is still here, though he may die at any moment." "Your grandfather?" "He died in a storm." "Great-grandfather?" "He died in a storm." "And his father?" "All my progenitors died here." And the saint asked her, "Are you not afraid of being on a ferry? Will it not be your fate to also drown in a storm on this river?" And she said, "Excuse me, father. How did your father die?" He said, "Comfortably at home in bed." "And your grandfather?" "Comfortably at home in bed." "And his father?" "Comfortably at home in bed." She said, "Are you not afraid of being in your bed at home?"

So, you see how much foolishness there is in this world, how much triviality. As I was explaining to our preceptors today, marriage has become a ritual. There is no love between husband and wife. It has to be done. If you get some money and a car and an apartment, wonderful. The wife is not the main thing — it is the jewellery, it is the house, it is a scooter or a car, depending on how rich your *sambandhis* are.

So what is this marriage you are talking of? Where is this love which should promote harmony, humanness, and ability to suffer, most of all. Without love, there is no ability to suffer. That is why today we are in a callous society. You see an accident and a man lies dying, and you don't stop. You don't want to be involved. Is it not callousness? Is it not heartlessness? Suppose you were in that situation. How would you feel if car after car kept flashing by on these wonderful autobahns, or whatever you call them. How would you feel? You put your aging fathers and mothers away in this modern institution called 'geriatric homes' — homes of the aged, prisons for the aged, hell for the aged — forgetting that every one of you is going to grow old (even the youngest here), toothless, and unfortunately without the capacity to smile, because your children are going to deal the same way with you.

So you see, we have lost our hearts. When you go for the gifts of Mammon, the gifts of the heart have to be put aside. You cannot have both. That is why we find in business there is a very definite streak of cruelty. You can sack a man when you choose. "I am the boss. You are sacked. You are finished. Take your pay and go home." No humanity. That fellow has been serving me for twenty-two years, and just off the cuff I have to send him home. Divorce — twenty-two years married, at least in America — divorce. How can you be married for twenty-two years and suddenly you become so unhelpful towards your wife or so hating that you suddenly discover you should not have married her at all? Twenty-two years later? I wouldn't be surprised, you know, if a man married today and divorced his wife the next morning; there must have been something which necessitated it. But twenty-two years after, eighteen years after, sometimes thirty years after?

So, our society is going along the way the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Roman, the Greek civilisations went. They have left beautiful monuments behind. We will also leave beautiful monuments behind, but we shall be dead — deader than a doorknob, as they used to say in the English language.

So, spirituality is not merely some sort of, you know, meditation and love and all this nonsense. It is a reversal of the trend that humanity is now taking. People are very happy and admiring when they see how Malaysia is developing. Now all our Indian brothers and sisters who are here, Indian origin, Sinhalese origin, say, "Look at India and look at Malaysia. How well we are growing." Beware — at least you, my brothers and sisters, beware. Because my country will survive. It is still stupid enough not to run after material pleasures, material things, because by and large, ninety-five percent of the people are still average Indians, with just enough cloth for one shirt, and enough food for tonight. "Give us this day our daily bread." That is what the Christian prayer says. It does not say, "Father, give me next year's bread and next year's bread after that." It says, "Give us this day our daily bread." I am not entitled to ask for anything more. And when we, like squirrels gathering nuts, amass wealth, where are you going to take it? Where? Have you any answer for that? Where are you going to take your wife's jewels, your houses, your cars, your power, your technology, your factories, your beautiful roads? Where are you going to take them? You will be dead. Others will ride in your cars and live in your flats and enjoy your wealth, but they, too, in time will die.

So you see, spirituality is a way of preparing each individual human being who has some sense still left in his head. And, more important, some heart still left here, to call ourselves human beings, to see these things, you know, to be perceptive of what is happening around us, and to try and change our own direction first, and then the direction of this life itself.

So, spirituality is not something merely for an individual. Strictly speaking, we are not concerned with individual progress except that, without individual progress, group progress is not possible. The group is important because it is constituted of individuals. When you give a party, it is a party only if there are fifty people at least. Not with one individual invited who comes in there, you know — and you sit and wait — bottles open, glasses ready, ice melting away, and what happens? "Where are my guests?" But the one fellow says, "Am I not enough for you? After all, if fifty people come, there are going to be more fools like me who have come to you for your party because they get a free whiskey and a free chicken."

So, you see, this is a very important aspect that we must recognise the need of seeing where we are going. Otherwise, you know, like these old horses of India with blinkers on — one side material prosperity, the other side indulgence. And then we have to ask, "Where are you going?" The question that you should be asking yourself: "Where am I going? I have six flats, seven, eight. How much more do I need?"

I hope all of you will read that beautiful short story by Tolstoy called "How Much Land Does a Man Require?" I am sure many of you have read it. It is a story I would like to tell here, about a man who had a vision or a dream, whatever it is, that he is going on a walk, and he sees the Devil sitting with a *topi* [cap] there. He says, "What are you doing here?" The Devil says, "I am selling land." This is in the old Russia, you see, with enormous millions of acres of land available. He asks, "What price?" The Devil says, "One thousand roubles." He says, "For how much?" He says, "As much as you can run around between sunrise and sunset." He says, "I will come back tomorrow." The Devil laughs and says, "You will come back." The Devil knows he will come back. "As much as I can walk around in a day between sunrise and sunset? Who is going to offer me such terms? And for a mere thousand roubles."

Next morning he is there and deposits his thousand roubles. He has his servant on horseback with posts to mark out the territory. He starts walking. "Good land. Good for rice, good for wheat, good for barley..." He goes round and round. Midday he is tired. He sits down. He eats his sandwiches and falls asleep. Suddenly he wakes up, you know, and the sun is here, and the Devil is there in the distance — a speck , and he has to get there if he is to get all this land; otherwise he loses his thousand roubles. But he is tempted — "This land looks beautiful, you see. Why should I leave it? Let me take a little *chakkar* [a jaunt] around." And then, as we say in Punjabi, "*Chakkar katege ith?*" ["Do you want to circle around?"] The sun is coming lower and lower to touch the horizon, and he runs. Now he is desperate. Finally he runs and falls, touches the cap, but he is dead. And the Devil takes a spade and throws it to the servant and says, "Dig him a grave, six by three by three. That is all the land he requires."

Beautiful story. That story has a moral. We tend to laugh, but we laugh when we are secretly afraid. You know the antithesis, or the drug, which can dispel fear is humour. That is why, when children are talking of ghost stories at night when they shouldn't be talking of ghost stories, they are giggling, laughing, but furtively looking around! "No, no. I am not afraid!"

I remember once when I was in school in Jabbalpore in central India, five of us of the class took our bicycles and went to see a picture — *Frankenstein*. After the picture, none of us could go home because in those days the streets were lonely. And Jabbalpore is at the centre of India — nothing at night. So one fellow said, "*Yaar, kaise jayenge hum.*" ["How can we go home?"] Another said, "*Chalo, sab ek sath chalte hum.*" ["We will all go together."] Then one fellow said, "I will leave you all at your homes." But at the fourth home he said, "Now how will I return to my house?" You can imagine the fear, you see, and the next morning they were all looking ghoulish and pale. Nobody had slept, because even in your bed you are not free of Frankenstein. Forget the Frankenstein of the streets; he is there right in your bed, too, with you when you sleep. That is why you cover your heads as children.

What we have to learn to be is perceptive. As Christ said, or somebody said in the Christian religion, "You have eyes but you see not." What do you see in this land that you see here, or in any other land, for that matter? The same nauseating things: the same overbridges, the underpasses, two, three lane highways, four lane highways. Last time I came, I had to go to Kwantan and I found the Malays laboriously putting sods of grass on the mountainside, creating a vertical lawn with pipes, with drains. They were greening Malaysia. I was shocked. It was worse than a woman putting on makeup. How many hundreds of thousands of square feet of sod they have done! Have you seen it? I did. And I wept for this country where money is being thrown away like this. And now today, I see everywhere big pieces are coming off because they have no roots, really. They have plastered, or painted, or put this unnatural turf that you use for sports nowadays — synthetic turf.

So you know, perceptiveness means to ask yourself this question: "In which direction am I going?" One direction we are all inevitably going towards, which we cannot escape — that is old age and death. You know, according to the Hindu philosophy, there are four evils from which we suffer — *janma, mrityu, jaraa* [old age], *vyadi* [sickness]. *Janma* means birth. First evil — we have not avoided; we are here. That which is born must die. *Mrityu* [death] we cannot possibly avoid. In between are two which plague us. I remember Jagjit Singh, in one of his *ghazals* [songs], you know, talks of the old people. *Jo pachaas ke upar hain, aur jo sharab pite hain, unke liye ghazal hai.* [For those who are above fifty and who drink, there is a song.] Age and sickness — will any one of you here be able to beat this? You have not beaten one; you are here. Many of us are grey; we have not beaten old age. All of us have been sick one time or the other, isn't it? The grave or the bier is waiting for us. We cannot avoid it.

Yet, the saints of India, the sages of this world have said, "There is a way of beating death. You may have not been able to beat birth, you may not have been able to beat sickness, old age. But nevertheless, my friend, you **can** beat death." How? By seeking immortality here when you have the time for it. It is not that we are afraid of death. I, for one, feel that if Yama should come in front of me on his buffalo, I would take a seat with him behind him. I have seen children in north India riding six on a buffalo. I would also get behind him and say, "*Theek hai, chalo.*" ["Okay. Let us go."] What is there to be afraid of in death? If tradition is to be believed, and if I am here, I must have lived many, many, many, many thousands of lives before this one.

So, we are experts in dying. We are experts in living. But that expertise is lost in this life. Are we living properly? No. How are we going to die? Also not properly, because one who cannot live properly, cannot die properly.

So, forget all this nonsense of individual growth, liberation. It's okay, you see. It is all there, but we have to look today at the destiny of the human race. I was in Australia last week, and they were concerned because of the ozone layer. There is a hole in the ozone layer, they were telling me. Who created it? Well, you cannot name any race, but this wonderful aerosol business, you know, it created it. But we are still using it! What will happen one morning? Suddenly we will all be dead, because nature won't give us enough time to even think what is happening to us.

You know how the people of Pompei died — overnight in their sleep. They did not know that the volcano was erupting. If you go to Pompei in Italy, you will find the mummies covered with volcanic lava, frozen into so many positions. Some are sleeping in the foetal position, some this way, some that way, all caught in a moment of unknowingness. Ignorance in sleep, no alertness even to know the rumble of the Vesuvius mountain. And next morning, preserved for posterity to look at in museums.

I dare say that none of you want to face such a fate. If there are any like that, of course, our message will never reach them. It will have no meaning for them. They will say, "One more stupid fellow from India coming to preach at us." I am not preaching **at** you. I am preaching **to** you. There is a difference. And I say also to you what my Master said: "Don't wait till it is too late." We can all — especially the young in their pride, their beauty, their health, their 35-22-35 figures — say, "Oh, I am going to be there forever. Not only my papa and mama, but even boys at school love me." Big deal. Do they love you? Every girl should ask herself this question, because it is a momentous question which traps women into the cage of lust and into unwanted matrimony and to subsequent decades of despair.

So, I tell our girls (because I am too fond of girls to not warn them in this way), "Men can take care of themselves." India is the land where women have been cherished. Those of you who have not read it should read Vivekananda's lecture on women — a classic by any standard. Please, if you have not read it, read it tomorrow and see what Indian women were, what Indian women could become, what they did become, and then compare.

So you see, I don't want to drag this harangue on too long, because I know you are all very proud and annoyed. "Who is this fellow to come and lecture to us?" Unfortunately, it is part of my work. I was lying in bed; these people came and disturbed me and said, "They want to see you." But you know, like my wife says, if I stand up, I can't resist talking, especially with a mike before me.

So, I want to give you the benefit of civilisation's experience — not my experience, not Ramakrishna's experience, not Buddha's experience, not Guru Govind's experience, but civilisation's experience — that as we went and got civilised again and again and again, disaster struck and civilisation was wiped out. Therefore we say, beware of what is called civilisation. Go towards humanisation first. Become human beings. Develop your heart. Learn to look upon every human being as your brother or sister. Understand that they have the same desires and the pains and the suffering that you have. That is why we see only people who have suffered can have compassion, because they know the suffering that the other person is undergoing. One who has never been sick in life is a callous, stupid person, unfit to be called a human being. Learn to suffer — a little — so that we may know the greater suffering of the others, and so that our heart may be filled with love for them, and so that we may love them and cherish them, not throw them into old folks homes, but look after them as our duty is.

After this humanisation process is there, perhaps complete in a few years, we start on the way to divinisation. So, in my humble opinion (and in all my studies of all that has happened in the thousands of years before us, and in my own small way, my thirty years at the feet of my beloved Master and Guru, Ram Chandraji Maharaj), it is an escapable conclusion that civilisation is against progress. It is against the progress of the human race, except for those who are stupid enough to think of progress as more factories, more roads, more cars, more high-rise buildings. That is not progress. That is destruction.

So, if at all any of you are tempted by civilisation, it is time to think again. I don't want you to accept my words — just think a little again. Try to feel the sorrow of others, the pain of others. Try to experience the first step in becoming human. Then you will see the miracles that can happen to you. I pray that they will happen to every one of you here.

Thank you.

PRECEPTORS' MEETING

Klang, Malaysia

19 November, 1994

Yesterday I said some things at Christina's school about communal behaviour in a group. I have just been talking to the Malaysian children for the last half an hour, and their only complaint seems to be that when they came and spoke about their experiences in India, or something, they were told to shut up, or something very rude. I am not saying we should go into an enquiry and investigate, but today even Mahathir Mohamad said, "We should not only be simple, but we should appear to be simple." In the law it is said, "We should not only do justice, but justice must be seen to have been done." So, there is no point in hiding behind our own respective characters and façades. Because if somebody feels hurt, that person is hurt, and we are responsible.

So, we have to be very careful about how we speak, what we say, when we say things, you know, and not just allow the tongue to take rein. In fact, if you are examples of even the smallest level of self-mastery, such things cannot happen. I am not blaming any individual. But it is a collective, you see, that it is not only today, but many people have complained to me about various persons at various times. And it is essential that, if you want this Mission to grow, it cannot grow in this fashion. There has to be friendship. There has to be love. There has to be understanding. If I ask everybody to come and speak, why cannot you people ask people to come and speak, or let them speak when they want to? Do you follow?

So, we have to guide the group without authoritarians. In fact, the word 'dictator' has been used by several persons in my presence. So, it is a definite need for preceptors to change their attitudes, and permit our people to express what they want, whenever they want it.

So you see, without love in the heart, friendship in behaviour — forget brotherliness; that will come later — at least common friendship, without understanding of other people's foibles, their need to have, you know, a little satisfaction, even if it is only ego satisfaction. Everybody has a different need. I like chocolate-chip cookies. Somebody else likes, what should I say, butter-snipe — a snipe in butter, chopped up. Somebody likes edam cheese, but there are people who rave over gorgonzola, which to me stinks. What can you do? People have different tastes.

So, we have to be responsive to situations and individual needs. And that you can only do if you forget yourselves, and be totally open to who is in front of you. What are they trying to say? Why are they saying what they are saying? Everything that is said does not need a rebuttal. You are complimenting me on my discussion with the doctor — I was only listening. But unless I listen, how can I reply? And if he goes on talking for one hour, I have to listen for one hour with the hope that he will give me one minute to answer afterwards. If he doesn't, it is his problem, not mine. I still go to sleep with a peaceful conscience.

So, this is a request for all preceptors. Otherwise, I am sorry to refer to such a mundane subject. I read a book recently where they criticised even love-making. They said, "Without love, how can you make love? It becomes rape." And it is not at all a distortion of the truth to say, even between husband and wife, mostly it is rape and not love-making. That is why women feel used, they feel dirty, they feel unclean, they feel imposed upon. But the fact is that. And what applies to the goose applies to the gander, of course!

So, you know, the Mission has not grown here at all. As I said yesterday, from 1977 I am coming here. Two visits with Babuji. Now this is my own personal second visit. I don't see. There should be at least five or six hundred abhyasis in Malaysia. This is like the South African Mission. They are a group of Gujaratis, and they don't like others. I said, "Where are the Africans in South Africa? Do you not have one, two, three blacks, at least?" Now I am happy to say that slowly they are coming. In fact, yesterday I received a proposal to translate one of our primary things — this *Practice* and *The Role of the Abhyasi* — into the Venda language. We are already working on the, what do you call that in South Africa, the common... Afrikaans we have done. We are also doing the language of the... whatever it is.

So you see, we are working. We have got already Chinese translations; unfortunately I did not bring. Can you write to Elizabeth Denley and ask her to send one xerox copy of those two Chinese translations? She has the original with her. Then you can make further xerox copies and use them here. It is in excellent Mandarin. They have had it certified by a professor of Chinese in Australia. *The Practice of Sahaj Marg* and, I think, also *The Role of the Abhyasi,* beautifully done by one of our abhyasis who is now a preceptor, a Chinaman in California, Kit Sum. He did a wonderful job. So you see, we do not know where talent lies buried, and for what.

So, our business here is like lighting the lamp and keep on trimming the wick to allow it to burn brighter and brighter. Otherwise there is no point in having ashrams and meditation halls and food, and all that — all that is a waste. I was shocked to hear that lady say that she is afraid to come here. She says, "When I think of coming here, my heart starts beating faster and I feel choked." It is very, very sad to hear such a thing, because where it is a satsangh, where there should be only Divine light and love, if somebody says, "I feel like I am going to prison and I don't know whether I will come out of it," in some way we are to blame. There is no doubt about it. I am largely to blame for this. Unfortunately, if I had known earlier about it, I could have perhaps taken some corrective action. But perhaps it is too late. I don't know. Time will tell.

So, this is a problem in the Mission, that we are not self-effacing. We have to efface ourselves. Even if you are at the top, holding charge of the Mission, you have to efface yourself and allow other people to talk, other people to speak, other people to work, knowing that there is something in everybody, and that something is of use to humanity. God did not create one hundred percent fools. As the old saying goes, there is nobody so good that there is no bad in him, nor somebody so bad that there is no good in him. And it is our business to find the good and to promote it and to make it grow.

So, there has got to be a lot of humility brought into the picture. And this is a general talk to all of you; I am not pointing my finger at anybody. And it is essential that this should happen soon; otherwise we will be having the same thirty, forty people, and one or two Chinese people for variety! It's no use — one from Singapore, one from Indonesia, and we pretend we are an international group — it is not enough.

So, I want you all to very seriously go into this business. And whenever you find something going wrong, have the courage to correct it. Don't let it slide. "If I say something, she may get upset. If I say something, he may get upset." Let them get upset. It is better to be upset now and finish it than to carry it for ten years in your heart and make it so deep that it can never be corrected at all. You follow?

So, that is all that I have to say today, except that the second important thing is you must practise Sahaj Marg precisely as it is given. Preceptors have to read the preceptors manuals. I don't think anybody here has read them. Has anybody read them? Only Tom. You have read? Well, if you need, you must get some more copies. There are so many new preceptors. And please read the books again and again. We have said, *ad nauseam*, that Sahaj Marg literature is not to be treated like a novel — you know, one reading and it is finished. Every time I read *Reality at Dawn* I find something new in it. Where did it come from? The words are printed on paper and they have not changed. It is the change in me that reflects what I see in it. So, we have to read it again and again, at least once a year, all the books of Babuji. You must read. Then only, you will be able to cope with Sahaj Marg, talk to people about Sahaj Marg without fumbling and without nervousness, talk to people without telling them things which are not applicable, talk to people about Sahaj Marg without exaggeration.

And most importantly, telling the truth — that in Sahaj Marg we don't come for peace of mind, we don't come to be happy, we don't come to find prosperity, we cannot even come here to find health. Better to say these things straightaway, because otherwise people come and expect that immediately, some sort of sanctification will occur — "My problems will disappear. My husband will love me more. My boy who has gone away will come back. Promotion denied for three years I will get on the first of January" — all funny beliefs. In fact, we have to tell them, "Sahaj Marg has nothing to do with your worldly life, except that as you progress spiritually there will be changes also in your material life, but it depends on your spiritual growth. If there is no spiritual growth, you are where your samskaras are, and you are not going to change — either this or that. But by changing spiritually there is the opportunity that the material wing will also change." That is the only hope we can hold out to them as far as material life is concerned.

And of course, when they want to go beyond that, they have to learn to suffer. And this is where I think our preceptors are lacking. They don't want to suffer rebuttal, they don't want to suffer argument, they don't want to suffer contradiction. Why not? People **must** contradict. You know, even in a government you need an opposition party; otherwise people will get fooled and robbed left and right. Why do we need an opposition party? To keep the ruling party in check. It is necessary.

So, we need unhappiness, misery, headaches to keep us in check, that we don't run riot, eating twenty-four types of noodles and then drinking whisky, saying "Nothing can happen to me," like Ravana, Kumbhakarna, all these people. "Which God? Where is God?" they ask. If they had the proper dosage of suffering when they were young, they would not have died. But unfortunately they were born into kingdoms, they were born into such power as no man had ever known, and they ran riot.

You know, love and humility go together. "*Vidya vinay sampanne.*" Knowledge must give us humility. Love must give us the ability to surrender to the other person. Babuji was not just saying something to please us when he said, "He who surrenders to God must suffer for all this universe." You cannot otherwise surrender. Like, "Love Him and you love everybody else," surrender to Him and you have to surrender to everybody else. And you don't feel it as surrender any more, once there is love behind it. You don't say, "I have surrendered to my child. I have to listen to what he says. I have to look after him when he is sick; my daughter-in-law doesn't." All this is going on in every family. Surrender means the ability to bear what we have to bear, patiently, in the faith that it is for my good that this suffering is coming to me. It is going to change me like, you know, you melt the gold to remove the dross. But we are always talking and not practising what we preach, unfortunately.

So, preceptors must do their personal sadhana meticulously — number one. No cheating. Meticulously they have to do it morning, evening, and night. This is a daily *kriya* [routine]. In our villages, temple worship stops only when there is a death within that *prahara* [compound] until the body is removed. Once the body is removed everything starts again, because it is called some sort of *dosham* or something. Here our daily kriya does not stop even when you have a Master and he is giving you a sitting. You cannot say, "I have had a sitting from him. Do I have to do my morning meditation?" Morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer meditation are compulsory under all circumstances.

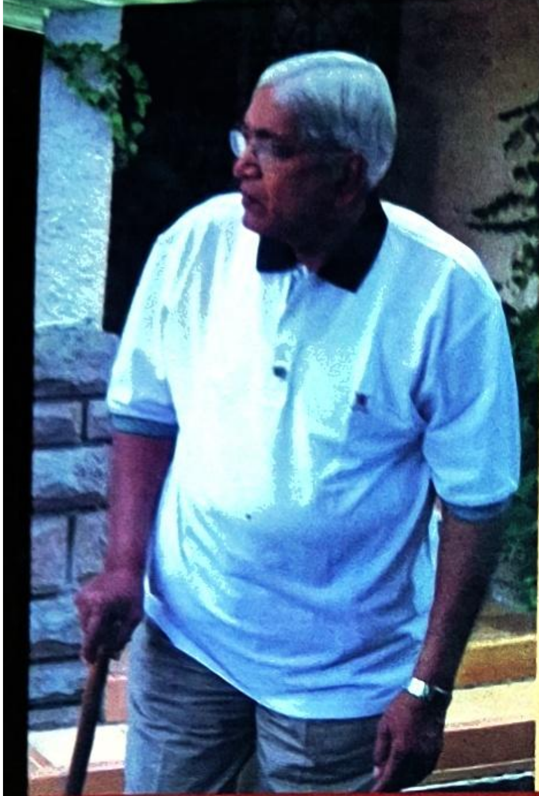
Number two, what should be compulsory is that preceptors understand the need to take sittings from other preceptors at least twice a month. I mean, for yourselves, you are all abhyasis. You are preceptors only to abhyasis. But you are also an abhyasi, and what will you do for your spiritual progress? You have to take sittings, and that is a very salutary way of giving us some humility — that even though I am a preceptor, I yet have to go to another preceptor for my cleaning. It will help in creating some humility, some love, and a dependence on others for our existence.

After all, we are an interdependent society. As Babuji said, "God is dependent on his *bhaktas.* If there are no bhaktas, who is God, where is God?" It is the human being who knows God. Cows don't know God. Dogs don't know God. The whole of creation, if there were no human beings, would not know God. Perhaps He created human beings only to know that He is known, and that His existence is perceived or experienced.

So, we have to understand this mutual interdependence, that we help each other to grow as preceptors, and that we help abhyasis to grow by serving them with devotion, with love and dedication, forgetting our own personal idiosyncrasies, our ego trips — all this has to be thrown aside. I have been giving such talks all over the world, again and again, but unfortunately there doesn't seem to be much response.

So, I hope things will change and next time I come you will have two thousand abhyasis here. I mean, it is easy. Why the same names I am seeing all the time? Tell me. Should there not be more people? And not because I want, but because in some way we are failing. It is like a shop where everybody is buying in other stores and in our store nobody is coming. Must be something wrong, either with what you are selling, or how we are selling, or with ourselves — that if somebody else was here, he would sell better. Three reasons; there cannot be a fourth.

So, please try to understand the seriousness of what I have said and, just to remove the heavy part of it from your hearts, I will now give you a sitting.



Heart to Heart, Volume VII

"...the way to God's heart is through prayer for others, not for oneself. Then God says, "Here is a selfless person who has started praying for others. His heart is getting softer and softer. He is now prepared to pray for everything, for everybody, but of himself he has no thought. Let me look after him." You start giving generously, selflessly, God says, "Here is one who gives generously and selflessly. Let me give more and more to him so that he may continue to give." Such a person is like a river; he cannot be depleted. He gives, and he finds he has not given, because what he has is always with him."

Shri P. Rajagopalachari

The author, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, (born in India in 1927), is the spiritual head and president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. He was raised in the rich cultural heritage of the East and educated extensively in the Western tradition. He emphasises that regulation of the mind is essential for the discovery of the true nature of one's inner self. This book is the seventh in the series titled *Heart to Heart*, and contains talks given by him, while traveling outside of India, during the year 1994.

Sahaj Marg (the Natural Path) is a Raja Yoga system of spiritual training based on heart-centred meditation, simplified for modern life. The practice is founded on the principle that God is all-pervasive, and therefore pervades the heart of each and every person. The goal of the practice is purely spiritual: attaining the ultimate goal of human existence, which is oneness with God, or Self.

Training in Sahaj Marg is free of charge and is open to all over eighteen years of age. The only qualification is a genuine and abiding interest in spiritual growth and the willingness to participate.

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